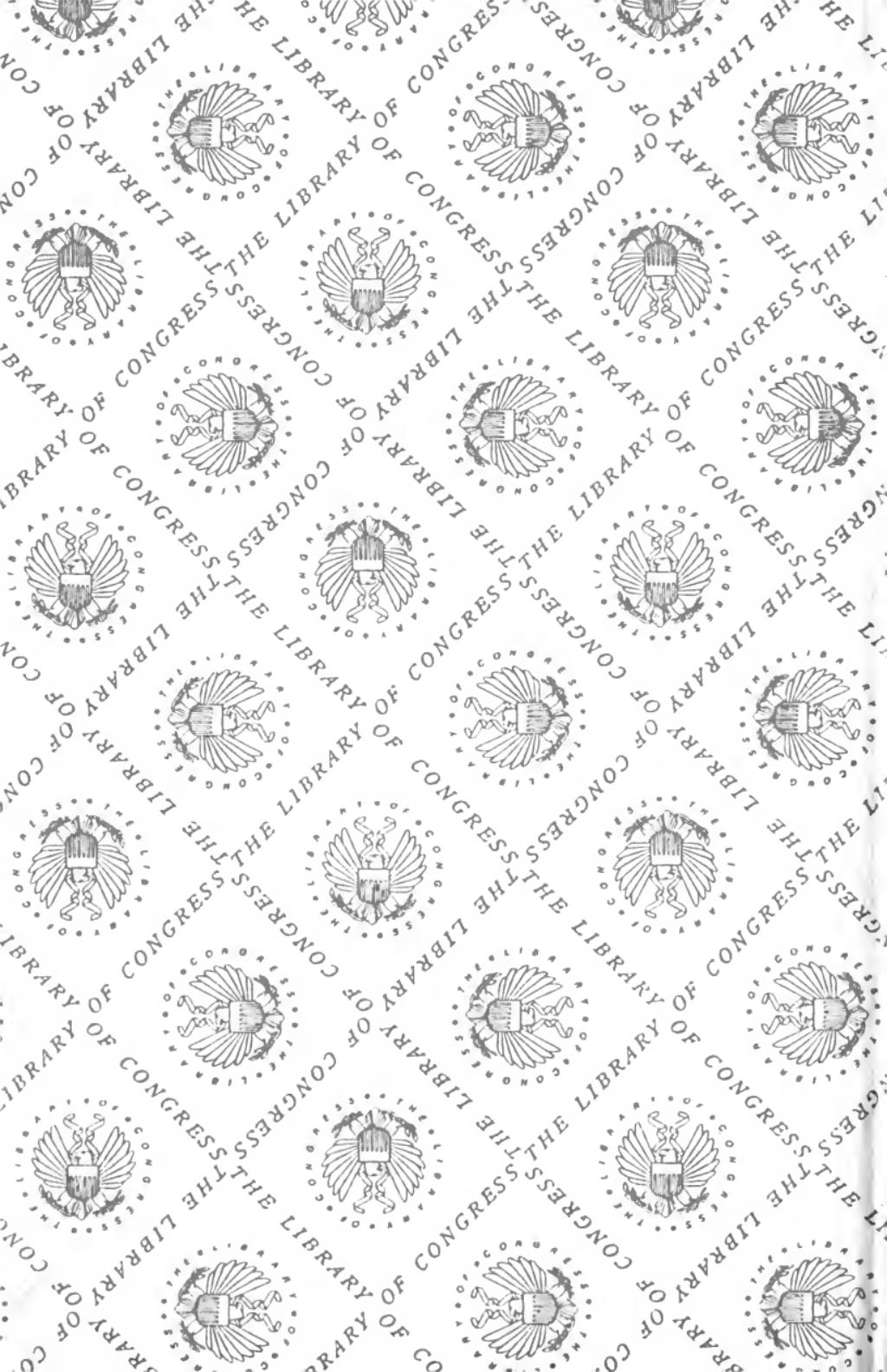
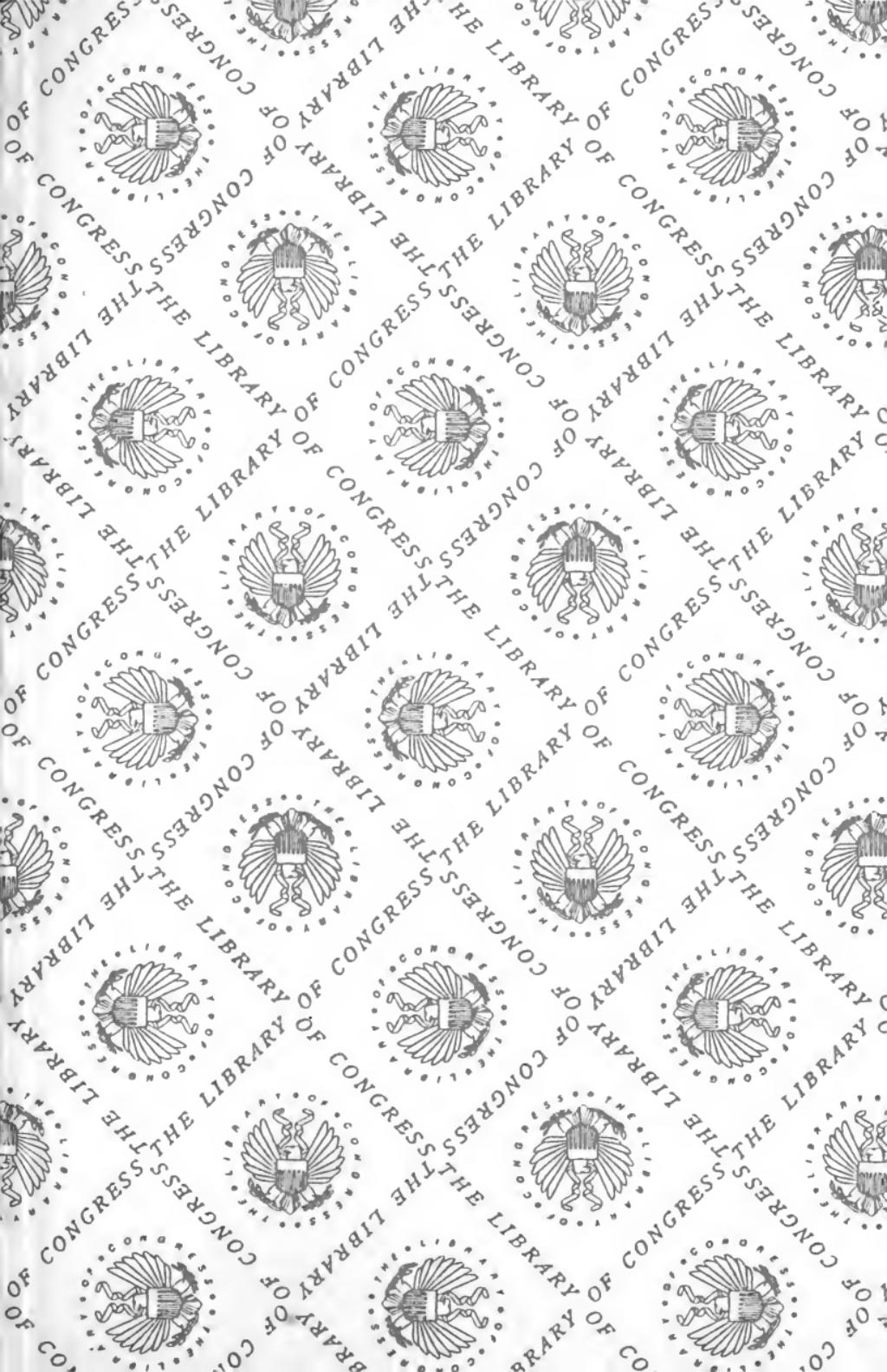


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The Fruit of His Folly

A Society Drama in Five Acts

BY

ARTHUR LEWIS TUBBS

“The heart that loves truly, love, never forgets,
But as truly loves on to the close;
As the sunflower turns to her god, as he sets,
The same look that she turned when he rose.”

—MOORE.

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The Penn Publishing Company

1894

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THE FRUIT OF HIS FOLLY

CAST OF CHARACTERS

JACK DUNNING,	<i>A Victim of His Own Folly.</i>
PERCY OGDEN,	<i>A True Friend.</i>
ASHLEY DRAYTON,	<i>A Man of the World.</i>
HIRAM BOGGS,	<i>Owner of Cowslip Farm.</i>
WILLIAM HENRY,	<i>The Hired Man.</i> } This part can be
BELL BOY,	<i>At Tremount Hotel.</i> } doubled.
DOROTHY DUNNING,	<i>Jack's Wife.</i>
Alice GRANDON,	<i>A Society Pet.</i>
MELINDA JANE BOGGS,	<i>From Juniperville, Vt.</i>
SARAH,	<i>Hiram's Better Half.</i>
POLLY FLINDERS,	<i>A Black Diamond.</i>

Time in playing about two hours.

SYNOPSIS

ACT I.—Jack Dunning's residence, New York city. The dinner-party. "No rose without a thorn." Troubled waters. An arrival from the country. Jack's confession to Percy. "I have staked all." Life or death. The telegram. Suspense. A wife's suspicion. "It is *death!*" Almost a suicide.

ACT II.—Polly Flinders shocks Miss Boggs. Percy and Alice, the peacemakers. The first kiss. "The ups and downs of married life." A man of the world. Dorothy learns the truth. Percy's pleadings. "Remember your marriage vow." Love's mastery. The promise. Misled.

ACT III.—The shadows deepen. Polly wants to die. A friend in need. Dorothy's despair. A memory of the past, pleading for the future. "The heart that loves truly."

ACT IV.—(Six months later.) Tremont hotel, Boston. Apartments occupied by Jack Dunning. Remorse. Drayton's confession. The money. New arrivals. "That man and my—!" Face to face. Undeceived.

ACT V.—Cowslip farm, Juniperville, Vt. December. Expected company. "A newly married bridal couple." Greetings. Reunited. Sunshine through the clouds. "Should old acquaintance be forgot?" Happy ending.

COSTUMES

JACK. Act I.—Full dress. Act II.—Street or business suit. Acts IV and V.—Ordinary dark suit.

PERCY. Act I.—Full dress. Act II.—Light trousers, frock coat. Act IV.—Traveling suit. Act V.—Same as Act IV, with hat, ulster, etc.

DRAYTON. Act II.—Stylish suit, rather showy; silk hat, gloves and cane. Flowers in button-hole. Act IV.—Plain suit.

HIRAM. Act V.—Working clothes, farm style. Change to neat suit.

WILLIAM HENRY. Working clothes, ulster and cap. Tippet and mittens.

BELL BOY. Act IV.—Blue suit, brass buttons.

DOROTHY. Act I.—Evening dress. Acts II and III.—House dresses. Act V.—Black dress; change to something bright but modest.

ALICE. Act I.—Evening dress. Act II.—House dress. Act III.—Street dress, hat. Act IV.—Traveling costume. Act V.—Same as Act IV; heavy wraps.

MELINDA. Act I.—Old-fashioned costume. Shawl, large bonnet, mitts, etc. Change to prim house dress, neck scarf, etc. Act II.—Same as last in Act I. Act III.—House dress. Act V.—Neat dress, apron.

POLLY. Act I.—Neat dress, rather gay. White apron, cap. Acts II and III.—Same. Act V.—Calico dress, large apron.

SARAH. Act V.—Tidy calico dress, white apron, cap and spectacles.

PROPERTIES

ACT I.—Door bell. Book on table. Telegram for Polly. Pistol for Jack. Carpet-bag and contents; band-box, etc., for Melinda.

ACT II.—Book of poems. Bell. Picture of Dorothy in frame on table.

ACT III.—Book of poems on table.

ACT IV.—Decanter of wine and glasses. Pack of cards. Newspaper. Money for Drayton.

ACT V.—Pants (Hiram's). Sleigh-bells. Four eggs for Polly. Satchels. Letter for Melinda.

STAGE DIRECTIONS

The player is supposed to face the audience. R. means right; L. left; C. centre; R. C. right centre; L. C. left centre; D. F. door in flat running across the back of stage; R. F. right side of flat; L. F. left side of flat; R. D. right door; L. D. left door.

R.

R. C.

C.

L. C.

L.



THE FRUIT OF HIS FOLLY

ACT I

SCENE.—Handsomely furnished parlor in JACK DUNNING'S residence, Lenox Avenue, New York. Table with books, etc. DOROTHY and ALICE discovered in evening dress. DOROTHY seated, R. C., ALICE, L. C. Pause after rise of curtain.

ALICE. What a perfect little bird's nest of a home you have, Dorothy dear—so cozy and nice. Really, it is quite delightful.

DOROTHY. Oh! yes, it is very comfortable indeed, and quite large enough for us. There are only we two, you know—Jack and I—besides the servants. And then, we have room for visitors, and manage to get along very nicely.

ALICE. Yes, just you and Jack. Dear me! you were always the luckiest girl I knew, as well as the prettiest.

DOROTHY. Alice!

ALICE. Well you *were*. You got all the prizes at school, had the most beaux, and carried off Jack Dunning, when half a score of the other girls were crazy to get him.

DOROTHY. Alice, dear, don't run on so. You gush just as badly as ever, I see. That was always your worst fault.

ALICE. Yes, I suppose so. But the truth will bubble out, you know, like the babbling brook. It cannot be confined. But where does Jack keep himself nowadays? I haven't seen him for an age until to-night. It was quite considerate in you to invite me to dinner to-day, as it gives me an opportunity of becoming better acquainted with your husband.

DOROTHY. Just as if you hadn't known him for years; as long as I have, for that matter.

ALICE. Well, yes. But after he became so attentive to you, I saw very little of him; and since you were married—goodness! you seem to have buried yourself in each other!

DOROTHY. No, Alice, it is not that. Of late Jack seems to have urgent business away from home. I do not see him, sometimes, for days at a time. He is away a great deal.

ALICE. Is, eh? Let me see—married—how long is it?

DOROTHY. What—that we've been married?

ALICE. Yes.

DOROTHY. A little over six months.

ALICE. Yes, six. Now we girls used to figure it down to a pretty fine thing (*counting on her fingers, slowly*), first month, all devotion; second month, a little less devotion; third month, devotion; fourth month, attention; fifth month, a little less attention; sixth month, carelessness. That's just about now.

DOROTHY. Why, what do you mean?

ALICE. Husbands, you know. Their devotion kind of wears out—the gloss wears off as it does from a new pair o' gloves. They don't come home so early the sixth month as they did the first; they don't kiss you so often.

DOROTHY. Indeed, Alice, you know nothing about it. Why should you?

ALICE. And why shouldn't I? I am a pretty good judge of human nature.

DOROTHY. But you have no husband, and you do not know that Jack is growing careless or less attentive to me. You are still a silly girl, I see.

ALICE. Yes, I suppose so. Mother is always scolding me for talking more than my share and saying things I ought not to. But, really, I hope you don't mind what I have said?

DOROTHY. No, no—only I— (*Brokenly*) O Alice! you told the truth.

ALICE. What—when?

DOROTHY. Just now. It is carelessness, forgetfulness. Jack is that way, and it breaks my heart!

ALICE. No!

DOROTHY. Yes; I cannot conceal it from you. It is true. (*Bursting into tears*.)

ALICE. (*hurriedly*) He isn't, either! I know better; he is the best, truest man I ever saw, and he couldn't get that way!

DOROTHY. Alice, it is true. You are trying now to cover up what you said before. Jack is not what he was; he stays out later; he does not seem to love me so well as he did.

ALICE. You cannot expect him to show it quite so much, I tell you. It is natural to get used to it and not be quite so demonstrative. But he loves you just the same.

DOROTHY. Do you think so?

ALICE. I know it. I know Jack Dunning, and I am sure that it is only his way. He does not mean to be unkind; you must overlook it. I'll speak to Jack about it.

DOROTHY. Oh! don't you *dare!* That would be dreadful.

ALICE. Of course it would, and I would not do it for the world. I simply said that to frighten you. But you will not worry any more, will you?

DOROTHY. No, Alice, I will not. Perhaps it is all my own fault. I will do better in the future and try to be a better wife; then I am sure I will find no cause to complain. But I am certain my eyes are red. How foolish of me to weep!

ALICE. Oh! that's nothing. The flowers of love must be watered with a few tears, you know, or they would fade.

DOROTHY. True, I feel relieved now for my silly crying spell, and I do not think I shall need another very soon. I will go to my room for a moment and bathe my eyes, if you will excuse me.

ALICE. Oh! certainly. (*Taking book from table*) I will look at this book while you are gone.

DOROTHY. Very well. I will not be gone long. Jack and Mr. Ogden are having a chat in the library, and I will call them if you like.

ALICE. No, indeed; do not disturb them. I do not mind remaining alone. I've got to get used to it, seeing I am doomed to be an old maid.

DOROTHY. Ha! ha! I guess there is not much danger of that.

Exit DOROTHY, R., laughing.

ALICE. (*looking after her*) Ah! me, how true it is that every rose has its thorns! When those two were married I was sure there was never a happier or a better match made in the world. And it *was* a good match, I am sure, for there was love on both sides. But *wealth* only on one. Now, *that* is the dangerous part of it. Dorothy had some money; not much, to be sure, but forty or fifty thousand dollars is quite a little fortune. And Jack—well, I hardly know what to think of him. Somehow I believe it seems to him that his wife's wealth is unlimited. That is because he had never had more than a fair salary before he married her, and, now that she has given all she had into his possession, he feels as rich as a Vanderbilt. I am sure I hope no harm will come of it, but Jack was always rash, impulsive, and yielding. He is easily carried before the wind, and with his extravagant tastes I fear that Dorothy's little fortune will soon vanish. He seems to be attempting to hide something, of late, with his unwonted gayety and light-heartedness. I think Dorothy mistrusts something, too,

but perhaps it is only my imagination ; I hope that is all. Ah ! me, the course of true love never runs smoothly.

Bell rings.

ALICE. The door-bell. It may be callers, or some one to see Jack on business, so I will withdraw until they have gone. (*Exit, L.*)

Enter DOROTHY, R., and POLLY, C. D., at same time.

POLLY. There's a lady for to see you, missus.

DOROTHY. A lady, Polly ?

POLLY. Yes, ma'am ; leastwise a female.

DOROTHY. Did she send in her card ?

POLLY. La, no, mum. She aint dat ar kind, I reckon. She aint no city bird ; I s'mise she's a country jay.

DOROTHY. Polly !

POLLY. Yes, fo' sure. Sez she, " Does Mis' Dunnin' live here, her what was Dorothy Grayson ?" and I sez, " She do." " Well," sez she, " I've come to visit her, and — "

Enter MELINDA JANE BOGGS, C. D.

POLLY. Here she is now. (*MELINDA is laden with carpet-bag, bundles, etc., which she deposits on floor at back, c. Comes down and embraces DOROTHY.*)

MELINDA. Oh ! it's really you, you dear child ! I wouldn't hardly a knowed you !

DOROTHY. (*perplexed*) And I do *not* know you, I fear.

MELINDA. Don't you ? Why, I'm your Aunt Melinda Jane Boggs, from Juniperville, Vt., your mother's aunt on her own side, and your great aunt. But, then, you wa'n't nothin' but a young infant when I saw you last, so I don't know's it's so dretful queer you don't jest reccumember me. But it's me and it's you, and here we are.

During this conversation POLLY examines MELINDA'S bundles, band-box, etc. Opens carpet-bag and empties contents on floor. Finds apples and eats one. Business.

DOROTHY. Yes, that is quite evident, and I have often heard of Aunt Melinda, even if I do not remember your face. I am very glad to see you, indeed. Remove your things. (*Without looking at POLLY*) Polly.

POLLY. (*with mouth full of apple*) Yessum.

DOROTHY. (*seeing her*) Polly, what are you doing ? How dare you, you bad, bad girl ?

MELINDA. The land sakes ! My things all over the

floor. (*To POLLY*) Oh! you little heathen, you ought to be whipped!

POLLY. I aint done nothin'.

MELINDA. I should like to know. (*Picks up things.*)

DOROTHY. Polly, gather up Miss Boggs' articles and take them to the blue room, and see that you conduct yourself in a becoming manner. I shall have to speak to Mr. Dunning about your improper behavior.

POLLY. Yessum. (*Gathering things. Offers to take what MELINDA has.*)

MELINDA. No, miss, I'll see to these myself.

POLLY. (*going, L. U. E.*) Golly, I don't care. Mister Jack, he never does nothin'. He just laffs, he! he! he! (*Exit L. U. E., kicking up heels.*)

MELINDA. Land, what a piece she is! I didn't know you ever had them kind up North here.

They sit. DOROTHY, r., MELINDA, l.

DOROTHY. They are *not* common; but Polly was a poor little deserted waif when I found her, in an old tenement house. There was no one to befriend her, so I brought her home with me. That was several months ago, and she has proved a faithful servant, although naturally mischievous.

MELINDA. Yes, I see. Well, I admire your charity more than I do your servant. But did you say I was to have a blue room?

DOROTHY. Yes.

MELINDA. To suit my feelings, I suppose? Well, I'll tell you now, I aint going to get homesick.

DOROTHY. I hope not.

MELINDA. I sha'n't. But what's it blue for? Do you have 'em all different colors?

DOROTHY. Yes; our sleeping-rooms are so arranged. It makes a pretty effect.

MELINDA. Oh! yes, I see. But I never should have thought of it. (*Looking about room.*) You've got it fixed up real nice here.

DOROTHY. Very comfortable and pleasant, indeed.

MELINDA. S'pose you got a rich man?

DOROTHY. Well, no, not exactly rich.

MELINDA. In good business, then?

DOROTHY. Yes, he—we manage very nicely. (*Pause.*) I suppose you will make us a nice long visit, Aunt Melinda?

MELINDA. Yes, of not above two months or so. I told Sarah, that's your Uncle Hiram's, my brother's, second

wife, sez I, I'm goin' to New York and find Dorothy and make her a visit and *see* something. I aint never been nowhere much, and I know she'll be glad to see me and use me well, or she aint none o' my kin.

DOROTHY. And so I am, aunt, and I am sure my husband will be glad to see you, also. But how did you ever find us, after you reached the city?

MELINDA. Well, that's it. Now, it was a wonder, but I guess it was luck. I jest sailed in broadsides and got the best of things. You see, your Uncle Hiram cut a piece about your weddin' out of some paper, and we saved it. It said as how you was to live in New York, and give the street and all, so I wasn't afeared. I asked a constable with brass buttons on, two or three of 'em (constables), how to find the way, and they was real obliging. The stage'll bring up my trunk, I s'pose. I told 'em about it down there to the railroad.

DOROTHY. I dare say they will attend to it, if you left your check.

MELINDA. La, no, I didn't draw no check; I aint got enough in the bank. I jest paid 'em in silver. *

DOROTHY. I—I mean the brass check for your trunk.

MELINDA. Oh! yes. The feller took that when I p'inted out which was mine.

DOROTHY. Very well. (*Rising*) I will show you to your room now.

Exit, L. U. E.

MELINDA. All right, I'll follow on. (*Going*) La, it's real nice here. Beats our parlor, I must say, and we've got as good's there is in Juniperville.

Exit, L. U. E.

Enter POLLY, L. U. E., looking back.

POLLY. Land, if that aint enough to kill this po' chile! Golly, she's green as ever I see. We'll have a circus, we will! *

JACK and PERCY laugh and talk, off R. U. E.

POLLY. Dar comes Mister Dunnin'. Reckon I'll skip into de kitchen and tell the cook 'bout our company. We's goin' to have a circus, we is. He! he!

Exit, C. D. R.

Enter JACK, R. U. E., followed by PERCY, both in full dress.

JACK. The ladies are not here. No doubt they will return directly. Sit down, Percy.

They sit, PERCY, L., JACK, R.

JACK. As I was saying, I feel almost like a stranger in my own house. I have been away a great deal of late.

PERCY. Out of town?

JACK. Yes, for days at a time.

PERCY. On business, of course; very urgent?

JACK. I rather take that as an insinuation that it has been otherwise.

PERCY. Why, no, not exactly, but—

JACK. But?

PERCY. Well, Jack, I know where you have been, and you know that I have known of your frequent visits out of town, and that I am entirely aware of your mission.

JACK. Nothing very bad, surely?

PERCY. Perhaps you look at it in that light. I cannot.

JACK. Indeed! Well, are there not worse places than the race track?

PERCY. Possibly.

JACK. You are rather hard on a fellow. Come, now, do you really think I have done wrong?

PERCY. Wrong, Jack? Tell me, does your wife know where you have been?

JACK. Man alive, *no!* She would hold up her pretty hands in horror if she knew. She has the queerest notions, calls such things gambling and all that.

PERCY. And so they are.

JACK. Pshaw, yes. But *she's* a perfect little Puritan.

PERCY. Yes, and you fail to appreciate her best qualities. She is far too good for you, I fear, Jack Dunning.

JACK. There, there, now—don't lecture. What's the harm? Can't a fellow have a little innocent sport?

PERCY. *Innocent*, yes. But *is* it innocent?

JACK. Certainly. I simply bet a little, lose a little, win a little—and mind you, always win more than I lose. That's the beauty of it. I suppose you'd call it luck.

PERCY. Yes, luck and chance—gambling. I tell you, Jack, I don't believe in it. I'm not a pattern of morality by any means, but I would not do as you are doing; no, sir, not for a great deal. I tell you, you'll be sorry, some day, if you deceive your wife in this way. Don't be mad at me, Jack. We have been friends for a long time and I say this with a friendly motive.

JACK. I know it, Percy, and I accept it in a friendly way.

I deserve it too, I have no doubt. But I cannot turn back now, it is too late.

PERCY. Too late?

JACK. Yes, for I have staked my all on the races of to-day. I am anxious—half crazy. Everything I have or hope hangs in the balance.

PERCY. Jack, what do you mean?

JACK. Hush! Some one may hear us. It is true (*looking around*) I tell you, my friend, my fate is to be decided to-night. I have bet—bet—*bet!* I must, I *shall* win, or I am ruined!

PERCY. Is it so bad as that?

JACK. Yes, worse than you know. But I have resolved, and I promise you faithfully, that if I win this time, it shall be my last venture. I will quit the races; invest in some good legitimate business and be a man, so that I may look my wife in the face and not fear that I shall reveal a burning secret.

PERCY. Well said, old man. But if you lose?

JACK. (*starting*). *Lose?* Do not speak of it. I can't lose; I mustn't. Why, I have bet a cool forty thousand on Bessie C., the queen of the turf, the champion. *She* will not lose!

PERCY. And yet, she *may*.

DOROTHY. (*speaking off L.*) I'll be back directly, auntie.

JACK. Not a word of this before my wife.

PERCY. Not for the world.

Enter DOROTHY, L.

DOROTHY. I was looking for you, Jack. I wanted to tell you that we have a new guest.

JACK. Indeed! And who may it be?

DOROTHY. It is Aunt Melinda.

JACK. Well, what, when, why, and *who* is Aunt Melinda?

DOROTHY. You ridiculous fellow! Why, she's my Aunt Melinda Jane Boggs, from dear old Cowslip farm, in Vermont, where I was born. She has come to make us a visit.

JACK. *Has* she?

DOROTHY. Yes, of not above two months or so.

JACK. Can't you prevail upon her to stay a while?

DOROTHY. Hush; she may come in at any moment. (*To PERCY*) I trust you will pardon us, Mr. Ogden, for speaking of family matters, but you see it cannot be avoided.

PERCY. Certainly. Perhaps I had better return to the library for the present?

DOROTHY. Oh! no, indeed. We will have dinner now, and I want you to meet my aunt before we go to the dining-room.

PERCY. Very well; as you please.

JACK. Oh! yes, we must meet the charming Melinda Jane. But why don't you show her in, Dot?

DOROTHY. Hush! she may hear you. I will go and see if she is dressed.

DOROTHY goes L., meets MELINDA, who enters, looking down, tying strings of large gingham apron behind her.

MELINDA. There, Dorothy, I've got my dress changed and an apron on; so if there's anything I can do, really I'd feel more to home to be a helpin'. (*Looks up.*) La, there's some men!

DOROTHY. Aunt Melinda—Miss Boggs, let me introduce my husband, and our friend, Mr. Percy Ogden.

MELINDA. How de do? I hope I see you well. (*JACK and PERCY bow.*)

JACK AND PERCY. Very well, thank you.

MELINDA. (*awkwardly*) Mebby I'll go out in the kitchen and see what there is to do.

DOROTHY. Oh! no, auntie, there is nothing for you to do but have the best time you can.

MELINDA. Then I'd better take off my apron.

DOROTHY. Yes. We will have dinner directly.

MELINDA. Dinner? Land, aint you had dinner yet?

DOROTHY. No.

MELINDA. 'Taint Monday, is it?

DOROTHY. Why, no!

MELINDA. That's what I thought. But I didn't know but mebby 'twas wash-day and you only had two meals. We don't to home lots of time.

DOROTHY. (*smiling*) No, it is not that. But it is our custom, in the city, to have a luncheon in the middle of the day and a course dinner about six o'clock.

MELINDA. Well, I suppose coarse food's healthy. But you don't have a regular hot meal at that time?

DOROTHY. Yes.

MELINDA. 'Taint good for you. You won't git it digested by bedtime. I don't s'pose you go to bed very early, though?

DOROTHY. Not very. But if you will excuse me, I will give further orders for dinner.

MELINDA. Certainly, but can't I help?

DOROTHY. No, thank you. I will return soon. (*Exit, C. D. R.*)

MELINDA. (*taking off apron*) Guess I don't need that. (*Hangs upon her arm.*) (*To PERCY*) She's nice, aint she?

PERCY. Very.

MELINDA. Does credit to her relations, if I *do* say it. I don't wonder you fell in love with her.

PERCY. Madam!

MELINDA. Why, you seem surprised! You *do* love her, I hope?

PERCY. Well, I—I—(*indicating JACK*) must refer you to her husband.

MELINDA. Oh! for goodness sake! Be you the *other* one?

JACK. Never mind, Aunt Melinda, there is no harm done. Dorothy was not very explicit in her introduction.

MELINDA. Wasn't she?

JACK. No. I do not wonder that you were confused.

PERCY. Do not let it worry you, Miss Boggs. I am sure no one feels hurt.

MELINDA. I hope it doesn't make no difference. I guess I'll go—I'll find Dorothy.

JACK. Very well, if you prefer.

Exit MELINDA, C. D. R.

The men sit.

JACK. Well, that's a go. And so you are in love with my wife? I think I am rather inclined to object.

PERCY. No, I am *not* in love with your wife, only as I admire all pure, lovely women. As such I admire *her*, but not as you do—or *should* love.

JACK. *Should?*

PERCY. Do, perhaps; but if so, you should do differently; show it more, be—

JACK. (*rising*) Percy Ogdens, don't go too far! You are an old friend of mine, and I will bear much from you, but you *may* say too much! I *do* love my wife and am true to her. You must not insinuate otherwise.

PERCY. (*rising*) Why, Jack, I did not.

JACK. Well, *don't!* Your words are like tigers' paws, softly covered when you will, but eager and ready to scratch!

PERCY. Jack, what do you mean?

JACK. Well, I don't like to be eternally preached at and

told that I am unfit to dwell under my own roof. I may be weak—I am—but I am not the wretch you think me.

PERCY. Do not say more; you may be sorry if you do. If you think of me as your words imply, you wrong me cruelly. I will go now, before we both say or do something which we will regret.

JACK. No, no; don't go!

PERCY. I think I had better.

JACK. But you cannot. What would my wife and Miss Grandon think? You came to dinner, and I—why, Percy, how foolish I am! I am ashamed of myself. (*Extends hand*) Take my hand and forget it, will you?

PERCY. (*taking JACK's hand*) Yes, with all my heart. We've been friends too long to quarrel now.

JACK. Yes, for we never have, and we never will. Sit down again, Percy. I have something more to tell you.

Sit as before.

PERCY. Well?

JACK. I do not know what you will think of me, Percy. Worse than you have yet, I am sure. But I must tell you. I shall go mad if I do not confide in some one, and I have no one but you. No, do not say I should tell my wife. I cannot, I *dare* not. I would *die* rather than have her know. (*Rises; walks to and fro.*) Percy, if Bessie C. lost that race this afternoon, as you say she may have done, I am a ruined man.

PERCY. Will it be so bad as that?

JACK. Worse. It will be a blow that I cannot survive. You must know that I did not have forty thousand dollars aside from—

PERCY. Jack, you did not—

JACK. I did. I bet not only my own money, but Dorothy's as well—almost every dollar of it.

PERCY. How could you?

JACK. Ah! you did not think me quite so base as that! I was in luck yesterday; I won. I bet again until I lost. Then I was crazy—*money mad!* I wanted to win again, and felt that I would; so I tried. I did win—enough to spur me on. This morning I came home, for I had promised Dorothy that I would be here for dinner to-night. I dare not refuse, for fear she would mistrust something. I reached the city with my wife's money untouched, but the tempter followed me. I stopped at the club. Ah! had I but come directly home, I need not have suffered this suspense. It was there that I met Ashley Drayton.

PERCY. Ah!

JACK. You know him?

PERCY. By reputation.

JACK. And that is well enough. *I* know him better than that. That man has been my evil genius. It seems to me that the greater part of all the wrong I have done I owe to him. He is a man who lives upon the gains of others; who has no scruples, if he but wins the game. Yet, he is like a serpent; he flatters, he charms with his wily tongue and his piercing eye, till a man mortal as *I* am cannot resist the spell.

PERCY. And such men live and pass as heroes in this crooked world.

JACK. Yes. Well, I saw him at the club. I told him where I had been, and then he got me in his toils. He spoke of the race this afternoon and said that Bessie C., the champion, was sure to win! urged me to bet. "Why," said he, "whole fortunes will be staked upon her. She *cannot* lose." I declined, but in vain. He gave me a glass of wine and talked until I was completely in his power; he led me on. "How much money have you?" he asked. I told him that forty thousand dollars was my all, for I was afraid to tell him it was not mine. "A mere trifle," he said, "but it will do. Bet it all."

PERCY. And you took that man's advice—such advice as that?

JACK. I did. I wrote a check for the whole sum and gave it to him. He would go and bet it for me, he said, if I must come home and could not go. He would surely win. Fool that I was, weak, miserable fool! Why should I blame him? The sin is my own.

PERCY. I wonder that you have concealed your anxiety as well as you have. It is after six o'clock now and the race must have been decided two hours ago.

JACK. Yes, and Drayton promised to telegraph me the result at once. I do not understand this delay.

PERCY. Nor I.

Bell rings.

JACK. The door-bell rings. It must be the messenger boy.

JACK and PERCY stand silent, their gaze fixed on centre door.

Pause, after which enter POLLY, C. D., with telegram.

POLLY. (*to JACK*) A telegram 'spatch, sir.

JACK. (*taking envelope. To POLLY*) You may go.

POLLY. Yes, sir.

Exit, C. D.

JACK. Now, Percy, my fate shall be decided. (*Holding up envelope.*) That little scrap of paper contains my sentence—life or death.

PERCY. No, no, you cannot mean that!

JACK. I do mean it. (*Hesitating.*) I dare not open it.

PERCY. But you must.

JACK. Yes, I must know my fate.

About to open telegram, when DOROTHY enters, C. D. R., followed by MELINDA. JACK hides envelope.

DOROTHY. (*laughing*) O aunt! it's too funny! Mr. Ogden, Aunt Melinda says she thought you were my husband, and—

MELINDA. Well, I didn't notice. You didn't exactly p'int 'em out, so I didn't know which was which.

DOROTHY. It was all my fault for being so careless in the introduction. (*Glancing at JACK. He is agitated.*) Why, Jack, what is the matter?

JACK. (*nervously*) Nothing, nothing. (*Forcing a laugh.*) Ha! ha! I was just thinking what a funny joke it was. Eh, Percy?

PERCY. Very, indeed.

DOROTHY. But *something* has happened.

MELINDA. O dear! O dear! What is it? I'll bet Sarah's sick, or Hiram's hurt, or something. Tell me quick. I can't bear no suspension!

JACK. Really, Aunt Melinda, nothing has happened. Dorothy, dear, I am sure dinner must be ready, is it not? Percy and I are nearly famished.

DOROTHY. Very well, I will order it served at once. (*Crossing. Aside to JACK*) You cannot deceive me. Something terrible has happened!

JACK *winces.* *Exit* DOROTHY, R. U. E.

MELINDA. I'm sure she'll want me, so I'll follow on.

Exit, R. U. E.

JACK. (*pauses; looks after them*) Now we shall see. (*Tears envelope feverishly. Glances at telegram, gasps.*) Percy, it is death!

JACK *takes pistol from hip-pocket, about to place it at his temple, when PERCY grasps his wrist.* ALICE GRANDON *appears, C. D., unseen, stands horror-struck.*

ACT II

SCENE.—*Same as Act I. AUNT MELINDA discovered by table, R., sewing or knitting. POLLY dusting about stage. Table, R. C., on which is photograph of DOROTHY in frame, book of poems, bell, etc.*

POLLY. Yes, Miss Buggs.

MELINDA. *Boggs, Polly—B-o-double g-s, Boggs. Not Buggs!*

POLLY. Wouldn't *Swamps* do?

MELINDA. You impudent thing! How dare you?

POLLY. Why, that's nothing. "*Swamps*" sounds more high-toned than just *Boggs*. Don't you think it does?

MELINDA. No, I don't.

POLLY. I do. But then, mebby you'll change it some day, and it may be *Mud* for all I know.

MELINDA. What?

POLLY. I said I was all muddled up.

MELINDA. Oh!

POLLY. As I was saying a little while ago, the city's quite a place, aint it?

MELINDA. Oh! yes, quite a big place, and *wicked*.

POLLY. I s'pose New York's bigger'n Juniperville, where you come from?

MELINDA. Land, yes. But 'taint so comfortable. We have room to stir about in our houses, and yards around them, and broad fields a-stretchin' out, acres and acres, with cows and cattle meanderin' over 'em, and sheep.

POLLY. No!

MELINDA. (*eloquently*) Yes! And birds and flowers a-blooming and a-singing, all so poetic. There aint so much noise and hubbub in the hull town of Juniperville as there is in one street crossin' here, but there's more comfort and peace and quiet to a square inch than there is in this hull city.

POLLY. That's accordin' to your way of thinkin'. As fer me, I'd ruther be found dead in the city than live for years in that place you call the country. It must be a reg'lar deserted island.

MELINDA. Oh! you wicked thing! How can you talk so?

POLLY. Well, I *would*!

MELINDA. You ought to be ashamed to say such dreadful things. I'll tell your mistress.

POLLY. La, you needn't. She knows it, and I wouldn't be s'prised if she agrees with me.

MELINDA. Oh! scandalous! I think the city's too wicked to live in, let alone *die*.

POLLY. Do you? I don't. You know, there aint no theaters in Juniperville, I s'pose?

MELINDA. Theaters?

POLLY. Yes.

MELINDA. I should hope and pray not.

POLLY. Oh! The theaters are bully. That's where you see—

MELINDA. I don't either! I never see nothin' of the sort. I wouldn't go inside of one of 'em no more than I'd jump into our well.

POLLY. You don't know what's fun. Why, that's where they have ballet dancing, like this (*dances, kicks*).

MELINDA. Shocking! Stop it, this minute!.

POLLY. They kick higher than their heads. (*Kicks*.)

MELINDA. (*rising*) Stop! stop! Oh! my sensitive nerves! I shall faint! Dorothy! Mr. Dunning! Help!

Enter PERCY and MISS GRANDON, C. D., stand looking on, laughing, till POLLY stops dancing, then applaud.

POLLY. (*seeing them*) Oh! I beg your pardon. Really, I meant no harm.

PERCY. There is no harm done, I am sure. Miss Grandon and myself have enjoyed your performance. Have we not? (*To MISS GRANDON*.)

ALICE. Very much, I am sure. Miss Boggs, though, seems to be quite shocked.

MELINDA. Shocked? Outrageously horrified. I sha'n't get over it for a month, if I ever do. Oh! you dreadful bold thing (*goes at POLLY, who dodges*.) I've as good a notion as ever was to *box your ears!* Go out of my sight and stay out, and I'll go and try and compose myself. I am so shocked, so upset, so disgusted. *Oh!*

Flounces out, L. U. E., in great consternation.

POLLY. (*mocking her*) Shocked, upset, disgusted, *Oh!* Well, I can't help it if you be. Some people's too proper to say boo. I haven't had so much fun in a month, anyway. I hope *you* aint so shocked? (*To PERCY and ALICE*.)

PERCY. Hardly.

ALICE. Not quite so badly as Miss Boggs seemed to be.

But to tell the truth, Polly, I do not believe your mistress would approve of such actions.

POLLY. No, nor me. But she never does nothin'. She might tell Mr. Dunning, that's all, and he'd *laugh*, ha! ha! ha!

Exit, C. D. R.

ALICE. You see? And he would *laugh*. I fear that is a criterion of the way Jack Dunning is regarded in his own home, by his own servants. They take liberties because they know he is too thoughtless, too heedless to notice or care how things are going.

PERCY. Your opinion is none too flattering.

ALICE. Well, what should I think? His own acts condemn him. Dorothy is breaking her heart and worrying her life out for his sake, yet I pity more than I blame him.

PERCY. And so do I. You would pity him still more, if you knew all.

ALICE. I dare say; surely, he must have had some dreadful misfortune, something terrible must have happened to drive him to such desperation that he would attempt to put an end to his own life.

PERCY. The man was temporarily maddened by a stroke of ill luck—the result of his own folly—which to him meant ruin and disgrace. In the frenzy of the moment he saw no escape but death.

ALICE. And was it so bad as that?

PERCY. No. Had he but paused to reflect or listen to reason, he might have seen that the blow was less severe than he thought. There might have been some escape.

ALICE. But Jack seldom stops to think.

PERCY. That is it. He is rash, impulsive. The passion of the moment carries him away. He has lost a large amount of money by a foolish act. Money not all his own. He sees no way to pay it, and to him absolute ruin and disgrace seem the inevitable result.

ALICE. And he has brought this trouble upon himself?

PERCY. Yes, although he did not realize what he was doing, I am sure. He has been led astray and by degrees has reached this end of misery and despair. He owes it all to one man.

ALICE. To one man?

PERCY. Yes, and to his own weakness.

ALICE. And that man, who is he?

PERCY. A false friend, a wolf in sheep's clothing, a man for respectable people to shun.

ALICE. And his name?

PERCY. Ashley Drayton.

ALICE. (*surprised*) Surely, not that man? Why, I have heard the name. He passes in the best society.

PERCY. As the world classifies society, yes.

ALICE. I can hardly believe it. And Dorothy, does she know of all this trouble?

PERCY. Nothing positive. She mistrusts, and Jack knows it. He feels that he cannot longer hide his disgrace from her, and would rather die than face her if she knew all.

ALICE. It *would* be a heavy blow to her.

PERCY. Yes, and Jack fears that she would turn from him.

ALICE. Never! Dorothy is too true a woman, and loves her husband too well ever to forsake him, come what may. Her heart might break, but she would cling to him to the last. But you must go and find him. Bring him back. Beg of him to tell Dorothy all. She will forgive him, and all may yet be well.

PERCY. I *will* go. (*Taking her hand*.) And thank God for all such true women as she—and you. (*Kisses her hand*.)

ALICE. (*drawing back*) Mr. Ogden—sir!

PERCY. Miss Grandon—Alice! That kiss would have been where it belongs, on your lips, had I but dared place it there.

ALICE. Why, Mr. ——

PERCY. My name is Percy; call me that. May I place another kiss where that one should have been? (*About to embrace her*.)

ALICE. (*repelling him*) No, you have not done my bidding.

PERCY. You are not displeased?

ALICE. I ought to be, you are so bold.

PERCY. But you are *not*, so I will be bolder.

ALICE. No, you are too bold already. I shall not be pleased until you do as I request.

PERCY. Then I will go at once. But I may hope?

ALICE. I shall not attempt to dispel any hope that you may have entertained. Only go.

PERCY. Angel!

ALICE. No, only a woman with a woman's heart. Go, I say, and bring Jack Dunning back to his wife, and when *their* clouds have rolled away, and *their* sunshine has returned, then—

PERCY. Then?

ALICE. Well, *then* we will see about some sunshine for ourselves.

PERCY. (*suddenly kissing her*) I begin to see light already.

ALICE. Oh! you dreadful man! (*She boxes his ears and chases him out C. D. R.* Enter MELINDA, L. U. E., and POLLY, R. U. E., *in time to witness above.*)

MELINDA. (*raising hands*) Oh!

POLLY. Did you see that, miss?

MELINDA. Why, did he kiss her?

POLLY. Guess he did.

MELINDA. Shocking! I never would a believed it of them two, they seemed so proper. I guess he was all to blame, though, 'cause she didn't seem to like it.

POLLY. Oh! no, she didn't; of course not. Girls never do.

MELINDA. Don't they? I thought mebby they did, sometimes.

POLLY. Oh! no, never. (*Aside*) La! but aint she green?

MELINDA. (*sitting R. C.*) Where is your mistress, Polly? I haven't seen her in some time.

POLLY. She went in her room and locked the door, right after breakfast, and I don't believe she's been out since.

MELINDA. No, she didn't come down to lunch.

POLLY. And Mr. Dunning aint been home, either. He went off early dis mornin'. But that's nothin' very new for him.

MELINDA. I'm afraid something's up, Dorothy seems so downhearted.

POLLY. Well, I s'pose it's the ups and downs of married life. Don't *never* get married, Miss Buggs.

MELINDA. *Boggs*, Polly.

POLLY. Oh! yes, *Boggs*.

MELINDA. That's it, and please remember. As for getting married, I never shall.

POLLY. No, of course you won't. Anybody'd know it to look at you.

MELINDA. What's that?

POLLY. 'Cause they'd see you're too sensible to throw yourself away on a *man*—horrid creatures! (*Aside*) That's taffy. (*Aloud*) Mebby master and misses had a quarrel.

MELINDA. Oh! I don't believe it!

POLLY. I don't know's I do, either. I never knew 'em to quarrel yet, but I suppose there's got to be a first time.

MELINDA. Well, then, we'll hope that that time is a long way off. (*Bell rings.*) There's the door-bell.

POLLY. Mebby it's callers.

MELINDA. I'm sure it's nobody to see me, so I'll not wait for 'em; and say, Polly—

POLLY. (*turns at C. D.*) Yes, miss.

MELINDA. You know you said you'd like to have me show you how to mix up them biscuits I was tellin' you about?

POLLY. Yes, 'cause I expect—well, mebby I'll have to cook some day, and it comes handy to know such things. (*Bell rings again.*) Bother that bell! (*Exit, C. D. R.*)

MELINDA. (*not noticing POLLY's absence*) That's sensible. Well, as I was tellin' you, them biscuits are the best goin', and they *go*, too. Why, the last time the sewin' circle met at our house I made an awful big batch; and thiere aint another person in Juniperville can come up to me a makin' 'em, if I do say it, as shouldn't. Land, how they did eat 'em! I was worried half to death for fear there wouldn't be enough, they went so—just like hot biscuits—and as good as any hot cakes you ever eat, and I aint braggin'. Sarah Simpkins said they beat any she ever eat, and she's a jedge; and Deacon Sparrowses' wife, her as was Alviry Jenks, and as good a cook as ever greased a tin, and her mother before her, she said—(*noticing POLLY's absence*) Land sakes! the gal's gone and I'm talking to empty air. Well, mebby it's about the same thing. I know what I say about them biscuits is the truth, and I aint braggin', either. (*Exit, R. U. E.*)

Enter POLLY, C. D. R., followed by ASHLEY DRAYTON.

POLLY. My master is not at home, sir.

DRAYTON. Ah; do you know how soon he will be in?

POLLY. No, sir; but if you like I will call my missus.

DRAYTON. No, thank you, my business is not with her. Perhaps I'll wait awhile; Mr. Dunning may return.

POLLY. Very well. Sit down.

DRAYTON. Thank you. (*Sits, R. C.; POLLY goes, C. D.*) I say, girl.

POLLY. (*pausing*) Yes, sir.

DRAYTON. If your master returns, let him know that I am here, at once.

POLLY. Who shall I say?

DRAYTON. Drayton—Ashley Drayton.

POLLY. Very well, sir. (*Exit, C. D. R.*)

DRAYTON. So this is Jack Dunning's home? Not a bad place; rather nice, all around. (*Looking at photo in frame, on table*) A pretty face. His wife, no doubt. No wonder he loves her. But pshaw! what's the use of tying one's self up, even for a pretty woman and a cozy home? I prefer to have my freedom and do as I please. (*Sits, R. C., by table; looks at picture.*) And yet, that's a pretty face. One could

sacrifice a great deal for such a woman, if he loved her. Man of the world that I am, I could almost envy Jack Dunning and wish that my lot had been more like his. Ah! well, it is too late now. I am not the worst fellow that ever lived, in spite of all they say of me. True, I gamble, if you must call it that, but I give my opponents a chance to outwit me if they can. I lead them on, perhaps, but I do not compel them to yield, and they say that "all's fair in love and war." (*Takes book from table.*) Hello! what have we here? *Poems of Love.* Well, that's sentimental enough for you. But then, they've only been married a short time. They'll get over it. (*Reading*) Ah! here is a marked passage; the book seems to open readily to this page. (*Reads aloud:*)

"The heart that loves truly, love, never forgets,
But as truly loves on to the close;
As the sunflower turns to her god, as he sets,
The same look that she turned when he rose."

Well-a-day, that's a rebuke for me, sure enough. I only hope they may be able to prove the truth of that rather optimistic assertion. Everything goes in poetry, but in real life it's different.

Enter MELINDA, R. U. E., not seeing DRAYTON.

DRAYTON. Ah! what fair damsel is this? (*Rising*) Hem!

MELINDA. (*starting*) Oh!

DRAYTON. I beg pardon, madam—or *miss*. (*Aside*) It must be *miss*. (*Aloud*) I trust I did not frighten you?

MELINDA. No, sir, not in the least, or not worth mentionin'. Was there anybody you wanted to see?

DRAYTON. Yes, I called to see Mr. Dunning, but I understand he is not in.

MELINDA. No, he is not.

DRAYTON. And so I await his arrival.

MELINDA. You may have to wait for some time.

DRAYTON. Why, do you not expect him?

MELINDA. La! you can't tell. He's as uncertain as the weather.

DRAYTON. Unsteady?

MELINDA. I—really, sir, you must excuse me; I—

Enter PERCY, C. D. R.

MELINDA. Here is Mr. Ogden; I will leave you to him. (*Exit, R. U. E.*)

DRAYTON. Well, that's cool. (*To PERCY*) I beg pardon, sir; I am waiting to see Mr. Dunning.

PERCY. Very well; perhaps you will succeed.

DRAYTON. You speak doubtfully.

PERCY. I *am* doubtful. In fact, sir, I wish to find him myself. Perhaps *you* can assist me.

DRAYTON. I?

PERCY. Do you not understand me?

DRAYTON. No, I do not. Why, I am looking for Mr. Dunning myself—am waiting to see him.

PERCY. Indeed? Would to Heaven you never *had* seen him.

DRAYTON. Why, sir! What do you mean?

PERCY. (*hotly*) I mean *this*—that I know who you are and *what* you are—I—

DRAYTON. (*coolly*) Well, you have the advantage of me. I do not know who you are, but I know *what* you are *not*—you are *not* a gentleman.

PERCY. You dare?

DRAYTON. Yes, for you are not acting like one. To my knowledge we have never met before, yet you have insulted me at almost the first word. I demand an explanation.

PERCY. You shall have it.

Enter DOROTHY, C. D., unnoticed, and listens.

PERCY. You are Ashley Drayton, the man to whom Jack Dunning owes his downfall.

DRAYTON. Why, what do you mean?

PERCY. What do I mean? You know what I mean. You are the man who has led Jack Dunning on to ruin, who—

DRAYTON. Stop! you have said enough. I am not accountable to *you* for any of my misdeeds, and I refuse to be the subject of your insults. Why do you take it upon yourself to champion Jack Dunning's cause? Are you his guardian?

PERCY. No, I am his friend, which you are not.

DRAYTON. And why do you say that?

PERCY. Because you have proven to be his worst enemy—his evil genius.

DRAYTON. (*angrily*) I said I had enough of this abuse. Will you stop it?

PERCY. (*unheeding*) Do you not know that Jack Dunning lost forty thousand dollars on a horse race?

DRAYTON. No, I did not know that.

PERCY. You—

DRAYTON. (*warningly*) Take care

PERCY. Well, you knew he bet that amount on a certain horse, and she lost?

DRAYTON. Yes, the horse lost, but—

PERCY. And you led him on to make the venture; you forced him into the folly, knowing his weakness. I tell you, man, it was a crime, and if harm comes to him, you are responsible.

DRAYTON. Harm? Why, I trust he is not—there must be some mistake, I—

PERCY. There is no mistake. The money, as you know, was not his own.

DRAYTON. No, I did *not* know that. Whose was it?

PERCY. His wife's.

DOROTHY *cries out and sinks into chair, c., at back.* PERCY and DRAYTON *see her, and are surprised and dismayed.*

PERCY. Mrs. Dunning!

DRAYTON. *(aside)* His wife!

DOROTHY. Yes, I have heard all. You can deceive me no longer. I have felt that a storm cloud was hanging over me, and now it has burst.

PERCY. Mrs. Dunning, I am very sorry that you have heard this. Only for my thoughtlessness and quick temper you would not have known.

DOROTHY. It is better so. The blow would only have been the worse for the delay. I knew that some terrible trouble was before me, and anything is better than suspense.

PERCY. But it may not be so bad as you think.

DOROTHY. It is so bad that my heart is breaking, for the one whom I fully trusted, has deceived me. Where is my husband?

PERCY. I do not know.

DOROTHY. *(to DRAYTON)* Perhaps *you*, sir, can tell me where he is?

DRAYTON. No, madam, I cannot. I came here expecting to find him. I came to tell him that—

PERCY. Stop! Your words are each one a stab to her poor, bleeding heart. If you have a spark of manhood left, go!

DRAYTON. Sir, you may be thankful that there is a lady present, or I would not overlook your insolence. I have given you no cause for thus misusing me, and did I not honor this house and its mistress more than you seem to, I would resent it more forcibly.

DOROTHY. Mr. Ogden, pray let it pass. It can do no good to say more.

DRAYTON. Madam, I appeal to you. I have something to tell you that you should hear, but I refuse to say it before that man. Will you dismiss him and let me talk to you alone?

PERCY. No. You insult her by making such a request.

DRAYTON. Madam, what is your answer?

DOROTHY. (*hesitatingly*) I—I—must trust to Mr. Ogden. He is my friend, and you are not.

DRAYTON. Very well, then I will go. But when, at some future time, you look back to this moment, remember that I tried to do my duty, but you would not let me speak, and what you suffer between now and then, do not lay at my door. (*To Percy*) You call yourself this woman's friend, and I doubt not that you mean to be, yet you are now proving yourself otherwise. (*To Dorothy*) Madam, I am a man of the world, but I still have a spark of true manhood left in my bosom, and it is kindled into flame in your presence, and in sympathy with your sorrow. I sincerely regret that I cannot be of service to you, but this man who calls himself *your friend* stands between us. I do not chide you, for I have nothing else to expect. Some day, however, I trust, you will think better of me than you do at present. (*Going*) Good-bye, and may the cloud that is now hanging over you, soon disclose its silver lining. This is the time that tests the depth of your love for your husband. Let it find you true to him, whatever comes, for remember—

“The heart that loves truly can never forget,
But as truly loves on to the close.”

Bows and exits, C. D. R.

DOROTHY looks after DRAYTON amazed, then, after pause,
starts up.

DOROTHY. Those words. Where did he hear them? They are from Jack's favorite poem.

PERCY. I do not understand.

DOROTHY. Nor I. (*Sees book on table—takes it.*) They are in this book (*opens it, points*) see!

PERCY. (*takes book*) Yes. (*Reads.*)

“The heart that loves truly, love, never forgets,
But as truly loves on to the close;
As the sunflower turns to her god, when he sets,
The same look that she turns when he rose.”

DOROTHY. He must have read the book while waiting.
PERCY. Yes, no doubt that explains it.

DOROTHY. And that is Ashley Drayton, the man whom you abhor?

PERCY. Yes.

DOROTHY. I think you wrong him.

PERCY. Mrs. Dunning.

DOROTHY. I do. At any rate, he is not all bad. I am sorry now I did not see him alone. I believe he meant to be a friend to me and what he wished to say might have been worth the hearing.

PERCY. Improbable, what could it have been?

DOROTHY. I know not, but I believe in him. If he is not gone, I shall call him back.

PERCY. I would not.

DOROTHY. But I *would*. (*Rings bell*) I believe we have wronged the man and it can do no harm to listen to him.

PERCY. I am doubtful. Perhaps I was too hasty, but I have no confidence in the man; and after what I heard, I could not even be civil to him. I quite lost my temper. I am sorry now.

DOROTHY. You meant it for the best.

Enter POLLY, C. D. R.

DOROTHY. (*to POLLY*) That gentleman who just left this room, has he gone?

POLLY. Yes, ma'am. I just closed the door behind him.

DOROTHY. Can you not call him back?

POLLY. La! no, missus. He's got clean out of sight 'fore dis.

DOROTHY. Very well. That is all.

POLLY. Yessum. (*Aside*) Wonder what it all means. Mebby he's de sheriff. Golly, I jest hope not! (*Exit, C. D. R.*)

PERCY. I trust that I have not displeased you, Mrs. Dunning? I did not mean to.

DOROTHY. I know it. You are not to blame. But, after *all* you have said of that man, I feel that he would be a friend to me, and that I should have listened to what he had to say.

PERCY. Perhaps it is so. I am sorry I interfered! Can you forgive me?

DOROTHY. Forgive you? You, my true and tried friend? I have nothing to forgive. But, O Mr. Ogden! how can I bear this shame and disgrace? My husband a gambler—a would-be suicide? I cannot bear it; it will kill me! (*Sinks in chair, buries face in hands, weeps.*)

PERCY. No, no, it will not. You must bear up and look on the bright side.

DOROTHY. (*looking up*) Bright? Alas! I see nothing but clouds and darkness before me. I could bear the loss of money, welcome the trial of poverty were Jack what I believed him, had he not deceived me.

PERCY. He did not mean to deceive you. It was rashness—weakness. He was led into his folly step by step. Had it not been for that man Drayton—

DOROTHY. No, do not lay all the blame on him. Jack Dunning should be man enough to resist temptation. He himself is to blame.

PERCY. But he did not foresee the result from the beginning. True, he was weak, but who is not? Surely, your love for him will enable you to forgive what was not crime, but passionate folly.

DOROTHY. Would it not have been a *crime* to make me a suicide's widow?

PERCY. But he was crazed, maddened. You must forget it all, forgive him.

DOROTHY. It is hard.

PERCY. Yes, but there are many hard things in life, and you can bear it. Remember, if you are true to Jack now and stand by him in his hour of trouble, it will teach him a lesson and help him to do better in the future. On the other hand, if you forsake him, it may prove his ruin.

DOROTHY. (*shaking her head sadly*) I cannot.

PERCY. Yes, you can. I am sure you can, and will. Think, what did you promise Jack when you became his wife? Did you not tell him that you would follow him through prosperity and adversity, that you would be true to him in life and death? Remember your marriage vow.

Pause, after which DOROTHY looks at PERCY hopefully and confidently.

DOROTHY. That is enough, you have won. I remember what I said. It was this—

JACK appears, suddenly, c. d., unseen by DOROTHY and PERCY, with flushed face, unkempt hair, slightly intoxicated. He listens.

DOROTHY. (*giving PERCY her hand*) I give you my hand and my heart; come what may, I am yours, and naught shall ever separate us but death. We will live for each other, and though the world should come between us, our hearts shall beat as one. I repeat my vow, and I will keep it truthfully. God bless you, my friend, for you have opened my eyes, and your pleadings have not been in vain.

PERCY. (*tenderly*) Spoken like your own loving self, and I am sure you will never regret this step.

JACK comes furiously down c. and encounters PERCY and DOROTHY, who are terrified at his appearance. He is livid with rage.

JACK. (*to PERCY*) Percy Ogden, leave this house before I strike you dead at my feet.

PERCY. Jack—

JACK. Go! I say. You are a traitor, a coward, and if you remain another moment in my presence, I will *kill* you!

DOROTHY. O Jack! Jack! Be calm! You do not understand.

JACK. Be still. With *you* I will deal later.

DOROTHY. (*endeavoring to prevent JACK getting to PERCY*) Jack, I implore you, listen!

JACK. (*pushing her roughly aside*) Stand back! (*To PERCY*) Go!

PERCY. Why, Jack, what do you mean?—What have I done?

JACK. *Done?* Hypocrite! Did I not hear you this very moment speaking in lover's tones to my wife? Did I not hear her vow to leave me and be true to you?

PERCY. *No*, you did not.

JACK. Dare you deny it, after what I saw and heard with my own eyes and ears? I tell you, leave my house!

PERCY. *No*, Jack Dunning, not until you let me explain. You have been misled. Listen to me.

JACK. *I will not*. There can be no explanations to dispute the evidence of my own senses. I believe only what I *saw* and *heard*. I say you are a traitor. You have used the cloak of friendship to destroy my home, to win the affections of my wife, to—

PERCY. Hold! I will stand much from you, for I do not believe you are accountable for your words, but you have gone too far. What you have said is false.

JACK. You dare to tell me I—

PERCY. *Yes, you lie!*

JACK raises his arm to strike PERCY, DOROTHY rushes between them, with uplifted hand and pleading face. JACK pauses with arm raised, PERCY calm and defiant.

JACK, L. C., DOROTHY, C., PERCY, R. C. *Tableau.*

ACT III

SCENE.—*Same as before. POLLY discovered seated on floor, R. C., her head on her arms, in chair, sobbing and crying.*

POLLY. Boo-hoo. It's jes' awful, it is, and I can't stan' it no how. I reckon it'll kill this po' chile. I'se got to leave my poor Missus Dunnin' and be lef' out in the street for to beg or starve and not to see her no mo'. Oh! it'll kill me, sure. Boo-hoo! (*Crying.*) (*Enter, MELINDA, C. D. R.*)

MELINDA. Why, Polly, what under the sun's the matter? What be you settin' down there for, and crying like all possessed?

POLLY. Oh! nothin'.

MELINDA. There is, too. Tell me at once.

POLLY. Oh! I can't! I can't! I'se goin' ter die, I is, and mebby the dogs'll eat me up, an' nobody won't care.

MELINDA. Child alive, what are you talking about? Get up this minute and tell me what you mean. Are you sick? Have you broke somethin', or what does ail you?

POLLY. Yessum.

MELINDA. Well, which?

POLLY. (*rising*) I'se sick—homesick, and my heart's clean done got broke all to smash. I jes' wish I had tears enough to drown myself in, and I'd shed 'em and shed 'em, and never try to swim a bit, but jes' sink and let 'em cover me up till I was all drowned dead!

MELINDA. How wicked you talk. Now I want you to stop such goin' on and jest tell me what ails you. Has your mistress been a whippin' you?

POLLY. No, it's a heap lot worse'n that.

MELINDA. Then Mr. Dunning's been scolding you hard, and I dare say you deserved it, too. You don't get scolded half enough, I'll warrant.

POLLY. Lor, miss, it's worse than any o' them. Don't you know?

MELINDA. Know what?

POLLY. Why, the awful things what's a-happened right in this very house.

MELINDA. Goodness, no! What is it?

POLLY. Well, we's got to move. Mr. Jack's lost all his money and gone off for to stay, and my poor missus don't know *what* to do.

MELINDA. How you talk. La, you must 'a' been dreamin'.
 POLLY. I wish I had, but I aint. Mis' Dunnin', she called me in her room dis mornin', and told me all about it. Sez she, "Polly, we've got for to part." Den she tole me as how Mr. Jack had los' his money and gone off, she didn't know where, only she never expected to see him no more. And she's got to leave this house and everything, and be poor and work for a livin'. And me! O dear! nobody knows what eber'll 'come o' me. (*Cries.*)

MELINDA. My sakes, I never heard anything so dreadful in all my life! I'm sure there must be some mistake. I must go and see Dorothy at once and find out what's the matter. I never was so shocked in all my born days. I don't see what it means.

Bell rings.

POLLY. There's that old bell what's always a ringin' when you don't want it to. I wish it was busted or somethin'.

MELINDA. Never mind, Polly; go to the door.

POLLY. Yes; and you stay here, so if it's visitors you can tell 'em missus isn't in.

MELINDA. Why, where's she gone?

POLLY. Nowhere; only she's in her room and don't want to see nobody.

MELINDA. But she's *in*.

POLLY. Not if it's anybody she don't want to see. You jes' tell 'em she isn't.

MELINDA. Land, you don't suppose I'd *lie*?

POLLY. 'Taint lyin'; that's the fashion.

Exit POLLY, C. D. R.

MELINDA. Something's happened jest as like as not, 'cause Dorothy's been actin' kind of queer, and I don't believe she'n her man gits along the best ever was. Dear me, I hope 'taint so bad's Polly says. I presume she's stretchin' it.

Enter POLLY and ALICE, C. D. R.

ALICE. Good afternoon, Miss Boggs.

MELINDA. Good afternoon, Miss Grandon. I suppose you called to see Mrs. Dunning?

ALICE. Yes.

MELINDA. Well, if it was anybody but you, I'd say she probably couldn't see you, but I don't doubt but what she'll be glad to see you any time. Polly, go and tell your mistress that Miss Grandon is here, and ask her whether

she will come down, or would prefer to see her in her room.

POLLY. Yessum.

Exit, R. I. E.

ALICE. How does Dorothy bear up? I mean, is she quite well?

MELINDA. No, I am afraid not. She hasn't been down-stairs to-day, and—and—O dear! do you know what's happened?

ALICE. Alas, yes, I know it all.

MELINDA. Then what is it? I feel terribly wrought up over it, but I don't know exactly what 'tis.

ALICE. Why, has not Mrs. Dunning told you?

MELINDA. Not a word. All I know is what Polly has rattled off, and it's dreadful if it's true.

ALICE. It *is* dreadful, and no doubt you will learn all soon enough. But I will not tell you; it is not my place to do so.

MELINDA. No, mebby not, but I must know the worst at once; I never could bear suspension, and the hull truth, be it ever so bad, don't hurt no more than a few hints and somethin' ahead, only you don't know what.

ALICE. Very true. I trust that we shall find the gloom that is over us only a transient shadow, and that the sunlight of peace and joy will soon burst through the clouds again.

MELINDA. Yes, we will hope for the best. But I'll go now, for I don't doubt you would rather see Dorothy alone. Only tell her that whatever has come or may come, be it good or bad, to remember that she couldn't have a more sympathizin' and lovin' friend than her Aunt Melinda Jane Boggs.

Exit, L. U. E.

ALICE. (*seated L. C.*) Dear Miss Boggs, I am sure no one who is acquainted with you could doubt that a kind and sympathizing heart beats in your honest bosom. The truest love, like the sweetest flower, often springs from the most uncultivated soil, and lives amid surroundings commonplace in comparison with its own rare beauty. Poor Dorothy, how my heart aches for her in this time of trouble. All looks dark ahead, indeed, yet I trust this is the hour before dawn and the sunlight of a brighter day will soon appear. How little did she think when she gave her life into Jack Dunning's keeping that it would come to this.

Enter DOROTHY, pale and sad, R. I E.

ALICE. (*going to her, taking her hands and kissing her*)
O Dorothy! I—

DOROTHY. Alice, Alice! (*Lays head on her shoulder and weeps.*)

ALICE. Cry away, dear, it will do you good.

DOROTHY. Alice, what shall I do? What *shall* I do?

ALICE. Be brave. Meet trouble with the courage of the true woman and faithful wife that you are.

DOROTHY. But have you heard—do you know the worst?

ALICE. Yes, Mr. Ogden has confided in me fully and told me all. I came at once to you.

DOROTHY. And Mr. Ogden, how does he bear it?

ALICE. Bravely. Like a true man, yet, with a feeling of remorse because he was so hasty and did not let Mr. Drayton speak and tell you what he wished.

DOROTHY. He must not feel that way. He meant it for the best and I do not blame him in the least. Perhaps it is not too late yet, Mr. Drayton may be able to help us.

ALICE. So Mr. Ogden thought, and went to seek him, resolved to apologize and bring him to you, but he is gone.

DOROTHY. Gone?

ALICE. Yes; Percy could not find him. He sought him at the club, then at his hotel; wherever there was a hope of finding him, but in vain. Finally he learned that he had left the city and gone, no one knows where.

DOROTHY. Then I am indeed hopeless. O Alice! when I think of that dreadful scene last night I wonder that it did not kill me! Jack was like a madman. How could he think me so base, so untrue? I could have forgiven him all. I *had*; but this. Oh! *this* is too much!

ALICE. I can hardly hold the man accountable for his actions. He was crazed by his misfortune, beside himself with passion.

DOROTHY. Yes, for he would listen to no word of explanation. Mr. Ogden tried to explain, I implored him on my knees to listen, but he would not. Threatening to kill us both if we spoke another word, he heaped curses upon our heads, and then crying, "Farewell; may I never look upon your faces again, I leave you to your guilty love!" he vanished.

ALICE. Poor, deluded man. He will yet find out his mistake and come back to you. It is all a terrible mistake, but I feel sure that the wrong will yet be righted.

DOROTHY. No, I fear not. Jack is so rash, so complete a slave to his passion, that I fear he will do something desperate.

ALICE. No, for he is a man of his word, and he promised Percy faithfully that he would do nothing rash. In his calmer moments he will realize that he has been misled, and will come home a penitent and humbled man.

DOROTHY. Even so, the happiness of our lives is ruined. Our love can never be what it was before.

ALICE. Dorothy, those words are not from your heart. You will forgive and forget all, like a true woman. But come, dear, you are tired and ill. Go to your room and rest.

DOROTHY. Rest? I have tried, but in vain. I cannot sleep, I cannot rest—only think, think, *think*. Oh! that I could lie down and die, for that is the only way I can find peace.

ALICE. No, don't give up hope in that way. Remember, you have friends to whom your sorrow is as their own. Mr. Ogden will do all in his power to find Jack and make him listen to an explanation.

DOROTHY. After last night? After the shame and abuse which he suffered from the one whose cause he was pleading?

ALICE. Yes, after *all*. Mr. Ogden is a noble man.

DOROTHY. Yes, and you love him.

ALICE. Dorothy!

DOROTHY. Yes, you *do*. I can read it in your eyes. The blushes that come and go when you are in his presence, or when you speak of him, tell the tale to one who knows you as well as I do. Have I not read your secret?

ALICE. Y—yes.

DOROTHY. I knew it. O Alice! may your love escape the fiery test that mine is passing through. May your married life—

ALICE. (*astonished*) *Married life?* Oh! he hasn't proposed yet!

DOROTHY. But he *will*. He loves you.

ALICE. (*blushingly and shyly*) Do you think so?

DOROTHY. I know that, too. A man's love is more easily revealed than a woman's. He will ask you to be his, and when he does you will say—

ALICE. Yes.

DOROTHY. *Yes*. What a little word—y-e-s. And yet, how much it means. It is the key to one's future happiness or despair. At first it may seem to open the gateway

into a Paradise of endless bliss, and for a time all is fair. Then there is a change. The winter comes, the frost that chills and the blast that kills. But I must not cast a gloom over your life, just because the sunlight has gone out of mine. Come with me to my room and help me plan for the future.

ALICE. What will you do?

DOROTHY. I do not know. I must do something, surely. I must leave this house. I must work.

ALICE. At what?

DOROTHY. That is what I must plan. I have a little money and a few jewels, but the money would soon be gone if I stayed here, and my jewels—I would rather starve than part with them. They were all presents from Jack.

ALICE. (*aside*) The old love lingers still.

DOROTHY. Come.

Exit, R. U. E., arm in arm, as MELINDA enters, L. U. E.

MELINDA. There they go, a woman who is married and another who would just as soon be. Well, I'm thankful I've got some sense. I never married a man yet, and I don't think I ever shall. The trouble with men is, they want their own way, and sometimes the women do, too, and they can't both have it, and then there's trouble. (*Sits R. C., knits or sews.*) Now, there's Dorothy, she's throwed herself away on a man what thought more of her money than he did of her; at any rate, it looks that way. He's up and done something now, and got them all into trouble. Well, it's just like a man, they're so selfish. When Dorothy's father died and left her some money, and her ma sent her off alone to boardin' school, I said there wouldn't be no good come of it, and there aint. Then her ma died, and we didn't hear much more of her till we read in the paper that she had up and married some man. Now it's come to this, just as you might have knowed it would. Well, Dorothy sha'n't want for a home. I'll take her back to the farm with me. Hiram and Sarah'll be glad enough to see her, and mebbe we can help her forget her troubles. And if Polly Flinders wants to go too, she can. Poor thing, she aint so bad after all, and she's so devoted to her mistress that 'twould break her heart to part with her. She'd be real handy at the farm, so I guess she can go, too. Mebby it's my duty to help her get good. There's plenty of room for improvement, goodness knows. I'll tone her down if I get her to Juniperville. She won't talk theatre and high kickin', I can tell her that, from the start. And then, too, I

think Dorothy would feel more contented to have Polly with her. Poor Dorothy, it's sad enough, but it aint no worse than you might expect. It's all from trustin' a man. O dear! what narrow escapes some of us *do* have!

Enter POLLY, C. D. R., steals up to MELINDA, touches her on shoulder.

MELINDA. (*starting*) Oh! how you scart me!

POLLY. Did I? I didn't mean to.

MELINDA. No, of course not, some folks never mean nothin'.

POLLY. But honest and true, hope to die, I didn't.

MELINDA. Don't say "hope to die," it's wicked. You don't hope no sech thing.

POLLY. I might just as well. There aint nothin' lef' for me to live for. Deedy dar aint.

MELINDA. Oh! yes, there is. How would you like to go home with me, to Cowslip farm?

POLLY. What, me? Dis ar chile?

MELINDA. Yes, *you*, Polly Flinders.

POLLY. Golly, d'know. Dat ar' Slip-up farm's in de country, aint it?

MELINDA. Certainly. It couldn't very well be nowhere's else. Land, you don't know beans! How could a farm be in the city?

POLLY. Couldn't it?

MELINDA. You silly thing, of course it couldn't. If you put a farm in the city there wouldn't be no city, and if you put the city on the farm there wouldn't be no farm. Have you got sense enough to see through that?

POLLY. I 'spect so. But I guess I won't go.

MELINDA. Won't go, why? You ought to be glad of the chance.

POLLY. I'd be lonesome.

MELINDA. A few minutes ago you wanted to die. S'pose you think you wouldn't be lonesome then, cause you'd go where there's plenty more as wicked as you be. Well, you needn't go with me, if you don't want to.

POLLY. Why, be you goin' to dat ar wicked place?

MELINDA. What wicked place?

POLLY. Whar dey aint lonesome.

MELINDA. You awful heathen, I hope not. I meant to the farm. Probably Mis' Dunnin' 'll go and I thought mebby you'd like to go with her.

POLLY. Oh! if she goes, yes, I would, I would! Deedy, I'd go anywhere with her. Can I go, can I?

MELINDA. Yes, yes. If Dorothy goes and she will let you, you can go too. But you'll have to make yourself useful.

POLLY. I'll work, I'll do anything, jes' so I can stay by missus.

MELINDA. Seems to me, you don't care much about the rest of us.

POLLY. Oh! yes, deedy I do, Miss Boggs, only you see I—I—well, I can't help it!

MELINDA. Yes, I see. That's all right. It's your love for your mistress that makes me say you can go. Mind, though, you don't speak of it yet, for nothing is decided for sure. That's only *my* plan, and mebby it won't work. But if it's in my power to fix it, Polly, you shall not be parted from your mistress.

POLLY. (*grabbing MELINDA's hand and kissing it*) Oh! you're so good!

Exit, C. D. R., quickly.

MELINDA. Poor child, she is not ungrateful after all. (*Wiping her eyes*) I do believe I'm almost cryin', and that won't do. I must go and write a letter to Hiram and tell him what's happened and ask his advice. I'm sure he and Sarah'll both say to bring Dorothy home with me, for they have often wished to see her, and would be glad to give her a home. And as for Polly, I know they won't object to her. She'll earn her way. Besides, I believe I'm gittin' attached to the little heathen. Sakes alive, who'd a thought it!

Exit, L. U. E.

Enter DOROTHY and ALICE, R. U. E.

DOROTHY. I am sorry you cannot stay longer, Alice, it is such a comfort to have you with me. But you will come again soon?

ALICE. Yes, soon and often. And even when I am not by your side, you know that my thoughts and my sympathies are with you.

DOROTHY. Yes, I am sure of it.

ALICE. I must go now, but you will see me again tomorrow. Be brave and hope for the best. Good-bye. (*They embrace.*)

DOROTHY. Good-bye.

Exit ALICE, C. D. R. DOROTHY stands looking after her—pause.

DOROTHY. Dear, light-hearted girl. How happy she is in the dawning of love's young dream. Not long ago I

was the same as she, and *now*, now all is gloom and sadness. Oh ! how could my husband deceive me so ? How could he think me the basest of all God's creatures, a faithless wife ? I cannot forgive him that, it is too cruel ; and yet, yet, I love him. (*Sits left of table, R. c.*) But I shall never see him again. My dream of happiness is over and this is the rude awakening, the sad reality. (*Pause, then sees book, "Poems of Love," on table; takes it up tenderly.*) This book, the one Jack gave me soon after I promised to be his. It seems now like a tie between us, a memory of the past, pleading for the future. (*Opens book.*) See, here is the passage he marked for me. How often I have heard him repeat the words,

“The heart that loves truly, love, never forgets,
But as truly loves on to the close.”

It is my heart of which it speaks, for breaking though it is, it loves and loves truly and cannot forget. O Jack ! Jack ! (*Buries face in hands on table.*) *Tableau.*

CURTAIN

ACT IV

Six months after Act III. Hotel Tremont, Boston. Apartments occupied by JACK DUNNING, nicely furnished. Table L. C., on which is decanter of wine and glass, pack of cards, etc. JACK discovered by table, reading newspaper. Pause.

JACK. (*crumpling paper impatiently*) Pshaw! I can't read! No matter what is printed on the page before me, I see the same old story between the lines. One name, one face, rise ever before me, haunting me wherever I go, whatever I do. *Her* name and *her* face. The only woman I love, and whom I have been striving to forget for six long months. (*Rises and walks to and fro.*) Love? Yes, I love her still, strive as I may to crush that emotion. I cannot forget, I cannot cease to love. O Dorothy! my wife, if you knew what I have suffered! Yet, she is not worthy even a single thought, much less a pang of sorrow or regret. She deceived me; she turned from me for a man who pretended to be my friend. I wonder that I did not kill them both. It was only by rushing from their presence as I did that I escaped the commission of a crime. They did not deserve to be spared, but I am thankful now that their blood is not upon my soul. Six months, a half a year, has passed since then, and it seems an age. How have I spent the time? In a round of dissipation and reckless living. How much longer it can last I do not know. (*Goes to table, takes up a pack of cards.*) These have been my only weapon against starvation. They have served me well, yet I wish I had starved before I ever touched them. (*Dashing cards to floor.*) I hate them. I curse them as I do the man and woman who have been my ruin. Oh! that I could find some relief from this torture—something to drown the thoughts that fight like demons in my brain! Drink; I must drink. (*Pours wine, lifts glass to lips, about to drink, when enter HALL BOY, c. d.*)

BOY. Is this Mr. Dunning?

JACK. (*sets glass down*) Yes, that's my name. What's wanted?

BOY. There's a gentleman in the office, sir, who would like to see you.

JACK. Did he not send up a card, or tell his name?

BOY. No, sir.

JACK. Tell him I'm not in.

BOY. But he said it was very important, sir.

JACK. No matter. Tell him I am *not in*. Do you understand?

BOY. Yes, sir. (*Exit, C. D.*)

JACK. Who can it be? Some one from whom I have won a neat sum, no doubt. Some father to condemn me for ruining his son. It's the same old story, the natural outcome of a life like mine. (*Pours wine and drinks.*)

Enter Boy, C. D.

JACK. Well, what now?

BOY. The gentleman says it is very important, sir, and he *must* see you.

JACK. Very well; show him up.

BOY. Yes, sir. (*Exit, C. D.*)

JACK. I may as well see him, whatever comes of it.. I have no fear. A few curses, more or less; what's the difference? I cannot expect blessings, so I will make the best of what comes.

Enter ASHLEY DRAYTON, C. D., stands silent.

JACK. I have ceased to expect anything good, and am prepared for the worst. (*Turns, sees DRAYTON. Tableau.*)
Ashley Drayton!

DRAYTON. Yes, *Ashley Drayton*. Your eyes do not deceive you.

JACK. Why—why—how came you here? *You* of all men.

DRAYTON. I came in the usual way. I of all men—the one you least expected to see.

JACK. Yes, *you*—the man whose acquaintance has been a curse to me; the man to whom I owe the first downward step in the path of ruin. Do you not fear that I shall give you your just deserts?

DRAYTON. No, I do not fear, for after I have said what I have to say, my just deserts are what I crave, and you cannot deal them out to me a bit too soon. Only let me speak.

JACK. Go on. Speak.

DRAYTON. First, let me ask you a question. You remember the time, about six months ago, when you bet a large sum of money on a horse?

JACK. At your bidding.

DRAYTON. Yes, if you will. Well, you gave *me* the

money to bet, as you were obliged to go home. Do you remember?

JACK. Remember? Do you think I can ever forget?

DRAYTON. I was sure the horse would win, and I urged you to bet because I, having no money of my own, was anxious to witness another's luck. I knew your gain would be mine, for I was unscrupulous and knew that you were in my power. I admit my perfidy, I do not seek to cover up my sin. Well, I started for the race track, to bet your money. I was too late, the race was over when I reached the spot.

JACK. *What?*

DRAYTON. Listen. I missed the train, but thought to get there in time, I failed. Your money—

JACK. For God's sake, man, what are you saying. My money—

DRAYTON. Was *saved*. My telegram explained. Did you not receive it?

JACK. Why, yes.

DRAYTON. And you read it?

JACK. Yes.

DRAYTON. What did it say?

JACK. Why—it—it—said, "The race is lost."

DRAYTON. And was that *all*?

JACK. All? What do you mean?

DRAYTON. I mean this. The telegram I sent you, read, "The race is lost, but your money is safe."

JACK. Then I did not read it all. I glanced at it, read the first four words, and in the frenzy of the moment crumpled the paper in my hand.

DRAYTON. Yes, and from that thoughtless act sprung all the misery which you and yours have suffered since then.

JACK. But why have you been silent so long? Why have you not explained?

DRAYTON. I will tell you. I was ignorant of your suspense and misery, supposing that my telegram explained the matter to you. I went to your house the next day to return the money. You were gone, but through a man who was there, I learned that they thought your money lost. I was puzzled, as I could not understand how the mistake occurred. I would have explained had not that man, presumably in your behalf, misused me.

JACK. And that man—who was he?

DRAYTON. A Mr. Ogden.

JACK. Curse him!

DRAYTON. No, I am sure he meant to be your friend.

JACK. *Friend?* Do not pollute the word. He is a scoundrel.

DRAYTON. Wait until I tell the whole of my story. As I said, that man misused me, but since then I have learned why, and I cannot blame him so much, after all. As we were talking, your wife entered, unseen by us, and overheard our words. She, too, thought your money lost. I offered to speak the truth to her alone, for I would not confess before that man, but he would not go, she would not send him away, so I left them, deep in doubt and despair as they were, resolved to tell no one but you.

JACK. Go on.

DRAYTON. Well, I left the house and sought you. You were not to be found. In an evil moment the tempter whispered to me, "Keep the money for your own; they think it lost and will never know." I almost yielded, so near to it that for several days, I made no further effort to find you. But there was still a spark of honesty smouldering in my corrupt nature, and one thing finally gave it life and helped me to resist that great temptation.

JACK. And that?

DRAYTON. Was the thought of your wife. I was touched by her sweet, sad face, and the memory of her misery helped even me to do right for once.

JACK. So you went to her?

DRAYTON. Yes, but she was gone, I knew not where. Then I sought Mr. Ogden, but the search was fruitless. No one could assist me to find them, or you. Only after six long months, Jack Dunning, have I succeeded in finding you. I would not give up, I have searched until finally I have met with success. (*Taking pocket-book from pocket*) And now, I can return to you that which is *yours*, and which has cost me many a struggle. Take it. (*Hands pocket-book to JACK*.)

JACK. Thank you, Drayton. You are my best friend after all.

DRAYTON. No, for I have only done my duty and confessed a fault. (*Extending hand*) Can you take my hand and forgive me?

JACK. With all my heart.

DRAYTON. Thank you. You will never regret it, for I have firmly resolved to do better hereafter and be a *man*.

JACK. And I believe you will succeed. Now, Drayton, I have something to tell *you*. Evidently you do not know why I am separated from my wife, why I have no home?

DRAYTON. The money?

JACK. As I thought. No, that is but a small part of my trouble. Even the recovery of that does not conciliate matters.

DRAYTON. But your wife will forgive you. You will return to her?

JACK. *Never.*

DRAYTON. Why, Jack, what do you mean?

JACK. You say my wife will forgive me. Well, then, I will not, *cannot* forgive *her*.

DRAYTON. *You* forgive *her*? Why, for what?

JACK. Treachery, faithlessness. Shall I tell you?

DRAYTON. If you will; I will not betray your confidence.

JACK. Then you shall hear a tale of deceitfulness and breach of friendship as base as ever yet was told.

Enter HALL BOY, C. D. R.

BOY. Mr. Dunning, sir.

JACK. Well, well, what is it?

BOY. Is Mr. Drayton here?

DRAYTON. That is my name.

BOY. There's a gentleman inquired for you and wishes to see you in the office at once.

DRAYTON. Very well. (*Going*) I will return soon, Jack.

JACK. I can wait.

Exit Boy, C. D. R., followed by DRAYTON.

JACK. Drayton does not know. He thinks my wife a pure, sweet woman—a very angel. Perhaps I ought not to tell him the truth. Sometimes I can hardly believe that it is the truth. Yet, I *saw*, I *heard*. There can be no mistake. I will tell him, for he has proved himself a better friend to me than those who professed so much. I *will* trust in him.

Enter DRAYTON, C. D. R., hurriedly.

DRAYTON. Jack, Jack, there is some one here whom you must see—some one whom you know. They just arrived and saw my name on the register.

JACK. Who is it?

DRAYTON. Mr. and Mrs. Ogden.

JACK. *Here?*

DRAYTON. Yes, they are coming to this room. I told the boy to show them in.

JACK. No, no, you know not what you do. Don't let them come—not now!

DRAYTON. Why, Jack, what is the matter? You seem excited.

JACK. Excited? mad! *Those two here?* That man and my— O Drayton! did you see *her*?

DRAYTON. No, but he said she was in the ladies' parlor. He will bring her up.

JACK. You do not know what you are doing. Surely, they do not know *I* am here?

DRAYTON. No, I planned it as a surprise. I told them a friend of mine was here, but did not say who. It will be a delightful surprise.

JACK. *Delightful!* Drayton, it may mean murder. I am not fit to meet them. Do not let them come.

DRAYTON. *Murder?* You are joking.

JACK. No, I mean it. Wait! *Keep them back!*

Steps heard outside.

DRAYTON. It is too late, they are here.

JACK. Then it is fate. Heaven help me!

Pause, then enter HALL BOY C. D. R.

BOY. *Mr. and Mrs. Percy Ogden.*

JACK stands breathless, DRAYTON surprised. Enter PERCY, C. D., followed, after a pause, by ALICE. They stand silent, amazed, C.; JACK, thunder-struck, about to spring forward. Tableau. JACK, R., PERCY, R. C., ALICE, C., BOY, L. C., DRAYTON, L.

CURTAIN

ACT V

SCENE.—*Plainly furnished sitting-room, Cowslip Farm, Juniperville, Vt. December. Table, R.; old-fashioned chairs, etc. SARAH BOGGS discovered seated, R. C., mending pair of pants; HIRAM BOGGS, L. C., in rocking-chair, dozing, head nodding.*

SARAH. (gently) Hiram. (Forcibly) Hiram! (Sharply) *Hiram Boggs!*

HIRAM. Eh?

SARAH. Wake up. Land, I should think you'd be ashamed o' yourself! I can stand anything but a man what goes to sleep in the daytime. It looks too shiftless.

HIRAM. Now, Sarah, that's jest like you. A man can't help being sleepy, can he, be it mornin', night, or between meals? Besides, I aint been asleep.

SARAH. The idea. You have, too, 'cause I've been watchin' you. Your head's been bobbin' like a hoptoad after flies. Say, do you know what day of the week 'tis, and what month?

HIRAM. Why—er—yes. Aint it Tuesday, the fourteenth of December?

SARAH. You know more'n I thought you did. Yes, 'tis. Well, what then?

HIRAM. 'Most Christmas.

SARAH. *Christmas?* I want to know if you've forgot who's comin' to-day? There, we're goin' to have company, and you set there as if there wa'n't no sech thing as company on earth.

HIRAM. Oh! yes, them city folks, Dorothy's company, what's comin' here on their weddin' trip.

SARAH. And aint it *our* company, too? Who owns this farm, I'd like to know?

HIRAM. *We* do.

SARAH. Yes, and we've got to entertain 'em, aint we?

HIRAM. Well, I reckon we've got to help.

SARAH. Then don't set there like a stick. It's over an hour 'sence William Henry went to the village with the team to meet 'em, and they may be here any minute.

HIRAM. Guess I'll be gettin' ready for 'em.

SARAH. Yes, I guess you'd *better*. And I'll go'n see about gettin' somethin' for 'em to eat. They'll be as hungry

as bears when they git here. Jest think, a new married couple; from the city, too. Now, for goodness sake, Hiram, put on your best manners along with your best clothes, and act as if we was jest as good as anybody.

HIRAM. Wall, *aint* we?

SARAH. Of course we be, only you know we aint jest up to city ways and whims, and things may look kinder queer to 'em.

HIRAM. Hm! All I've got to say is, if they think any the less o' me because I'm a country farmer and aint spruce enough for 'em, is that they aint the kind of folks I'll treat long as if I liked 'em. 'Taint my way.

SARAH. Don't you worry, Hiram. Aint they our Dorothy's friends, and didn't she come back to us, after all them years, jest the same as she went away?

HIRAM. Bless her dear heart, of course she did.

SARAH. And do you suppose she'd have any friends come here what would snub her Uncle Hiram and Aunt Sarah?

HIRAM. No, I don't. Not by a jug-full.

SARAH. That's what I say. Jest think, it's over six months now since Melinda Jane come back from the city and brought our poor little Dorothy, with her heart a breakin', and her young life ruined by a heartless man. Poor dear, she's jest worryin' her life out, for, although she never mentions her husband's name, I am sure she loves him jest as much as ever.

HIRAM. Yes, and she always will. There's nothin'll ever bring the roses back to her cheeks but his kisses, nothin'll bring the smiles back to her lips but his kind words.

SARAH. Hiram Boggs, how sentimental you're gettin'. You must 'a' been readin' poetry. But, goodness, we're talkin' too much. You must get ready. I've had my dress changed an hour. (*Holding up pants*) There, I've mended that hole in your best pants. Now, you go and put 'em on. (*Hands pants to him*.) You've got to look decent when you meet our company. Hurry, up, too. Don't go to sleep.

HIRAM. Now, Sary, don't keep givin' me sech digs. I aint lazy. I'll show you how I *can* hurry when I try. (*Rushes out, L. U. E.*)

SARAH. (*surprised*) Gracious, that's the quickest move that man's made sence the brindle cow choked to death! Well, I must see about startin' the supper. I wonder where Polly Flinders is? Land, that gal's a piece! When she first come, I thought I never could stand it, she carried on so and raised such a rumpus. But she's gettin' used to our ways now and aint so bad. She's lots o' help, too, if she

does shirk some, and I don't see how I ever got along without her.

POLLY stamps feet, off C. D.

SARAH. There she is now. I wonder what she's been up to.

Enter POLLY, c., shawl over her head, shaking off snow, she holds up her apron, in which are four eggs.

POLLY. Boo-o-o, it's cold!

SARAH. You can't expect it'll be *hot*, this time o' year. Where've you been?

POLLY. Out to the barn, ma'am, after de eggs.

SARAH. How many did you get?

POLLY. (*opening apron and counting*) One—two—free—four. Four, and *one more*.

SARAH. That makes *five*. Them hens don't lay worth a cent, lately.

POLLY. No, ma'am, I'se only jest got *four*.

SARAH. Why, four and one is *five*.

POLLY. Not dis time. You see, I—I—dropped one.

SARAH. You *did*?

POLLY. Yes, but deedy I didn't mean to. It dropped out o' my apron right onto de hard ice by de barn do', and *it broke*.

SARAH. You don't say! Probably eleven eggs out of a dozen *wouldn't* break if you dropped 'em on hard ice.

POLLY. Golly, guess I'll try it when I get time!

SARAH. You needn't, you little goose. You go into the kitchen and peel some potatoes; a good lot, too, 'cause you know who's comin', and I'm goin' to give 'em a good hot meal.

POLLY. Yes; Mr. Ogden and Miss Grandon, only they's *one* now. I always know'd they was in love. They used to act awful gone and get dreadful spooney. I cotched 'em at it sometimes.

SARAH. You mustn't talk such dreadful slang. I thought Melinda Jane had been learning you different.

POLLY. Oh! golly, I forgot. (*Skips off, R. U. E.*)

SARAH. Gracious! She'll break the rest o' them eggs, if she aint careful.

Enter DOROTHY and MELINDA, R. U. E. DOROTHY in black dress, pale.

SARAH. Here you be at last. I wondered why you didn't come down-stairs. How be you feelin', Dorothy?

DOROTHY. Quite well, thank you, Aunt Sarah.

SARAH. That's good. You look kind o' pale, though.

MELINDA. It's that black dress. I've been tryin' to persuade her to put on somethin' bright. What'll Mr. and Mrs. Ogden think to see you all dressed in black, as if 'twas a funeral? They won't think you're very glad to see 'em. Will they, Sarah?

SARAH. I'm afraid not. Haven't you got something with some color in?

DOROTHY. Yes, but I have worn black ever since—since—

MELINDA. Yes, ever since you came here, and before. We know when and why, but that's no reason you can't chirk up a little, now that some of your friends are coming. Aint you glad?

DOROTHY. Oh! *so* glad! It will be a treat indeed to see Mr. Ogden and Alice, even though they are so closely connected with the sad past. Yes, I shall be *very* glad to see them.

MELINDA. Then go and put on one of them pretty dresses. You've got plenty of them.

SARAH. Yes, *do*, dear.

DOROTHY. I *will*. You were so kind to invite my friends here; you have been so good and done so much for me that I would be very ungrateful to displease you now. I will do as you say.

SARAH. Not if it hurts you, Dorothy.

MELINDA. No, no; I didn't think of that.

DOROTHY. It does not hurt me. It is best. I would not like to cast a gloom over the happiness of Alice and her husband, as I am sure I would were they to see me now. I will try my best to be cheerful, at least while they are here.

MELINDA. That's the way to do. Isn't it, Sarah?

SARAH. Yes; of course it is.

DOROTHY. Then I will go. I will return soon.

Exit DOROTHY, R. U. E.

MELINDA. Well, she's doin' wonders. I aint seen her look so bright as that sence her husband left her. Dear me, I wish she could stop lovin' him. He aint worth a single thought.

SARAH. But she never *will*. She'll love him as long as she lives. Don't you suppose they'll ever get together again?

MELINDA. It's doubtful. Yet they may. You know Miss Grandon—that is, Mrs. Ogden—wrote *me* a letter, too, 'long with Dorothy's?

SARAH. Yes.

MELINDA. And one thing she said kind o' give me hopes that she knew something too good to tell.

SARAH. Why, what did she say?

MELINDA. (*takes letter from pocket*) Here 'tis. (*Reads*) "We have a great and sweet surprise for Dorothy and all of you; but do not tell her a word. You will know all soon after we arrive."

SARAH. Why, do you suppose it's her husband—Jack Dunning?

MELINDA. (*glancing R. U. E.*) Hush, she may hear. Yes, I do. She couldn't mean anything else. They must have found him while traveling around on their weddin' tower.

SARAH. Oh! I hope so, for Dorothy's sake.

MELINDA. Yes, for she'll never be happy without him.

POLLY. (*loudly, off R. U. E.*) Say, come and see if I've got 'nough potatoes!

SARAH. Yes, in a minute. Dear me, that child always wants something.

MELINDA. I'll go. You know I was goin' to mix up some of them biscuits? You say yourself that I can make 'em the best of anybody in Juniperville—even *you*, and I aint braggin', either.

Exit, R. U. E.

SARAH. Dear me, I'm about upset. Company comin', and a newly married bridal couple, too, on their tower. Such a responsibility. I hope everything 'll go off all right.

Enter HIRAM, L. U. E., in another suit, collar and necktie in hand.

HIRAM. There, Sary, they're changed. Was I very long?

SARAH. No, you done pretty well, for you.

HIRAM. For *me*, eh? Always *some* slur.

SARAH. Now, Hiram!

HIRAM. That's all right; you didn't mean nothin'. You never do.

SARAH. Now, I guess you're slurrin' back. Well, we'll call it even.

HIRAM. All right. Say, Sarah, button on this collar, will you? I've had an all-fired hard tussle with it, and it's too much for me. I'd ruther hoe an acre of potatoes than wear a biled shirt and a starched collar for ten minutes. Wouldn't I look good enough without the collar?

SARAH. No, of course you wouldn't. Come here, I'll fix it. (*Sits and takes collar and tie.* HIRAM *about to kneel in front of her.*)

SARAH. Don't get on the floor, you'll spoil your pants.
 (Rising.) Here, you sit down there. (He sits, she attempts to button his collar on band.)

HIRAM. Oh! oh! don't pinch so!

SARAH. Did I?

HIRAM. Mebby you didn't, but I don't know what else you'd call it.

SARAH. Well, never mind. It's on now. Now for the necktie. (Fixes tie.)

SARAH. There, now you're all fixed.

HIRAM. Much obliged. I feel fine enough to go sparkin' a gal. Guess I will.

SARAH. Hiram Boggs! Who?

HIRAM. Why you, of course, who else could it be?
 (About to embrace her.)

SARAH. O Hiram! (Sentimentally.)

Sleigh bells heard in distance.

HIRAM. They're comin'!

SARAH. Yes, that's them. Is my hair straight? How do I look?

HIRAM. You look all right. Prime as a peach.

SARAH. (straightening things) I hope everything's in order.

Bells heard nearer and nearer, finally at door. Horses heard. Wm. HENRY outside, cries, "Whoa! Whoa!" HIRAM and SARAH go to door, c., open it, HIRAM goes out. After pause, re-enter, followed by PERCY and ALICE, covered with snow. They bring in bags, etc.

Enter MELINDA, R., wiping hands on apron.

MELINDA. Oh! how de do? How de do? I'm so glad to see you! (Kissing ALICE.)

ALICE. Dear Miss Boggs, it is indeed a pleasure to meet you again.

MELINDA. And Mr. Ogden, too, I am very glad to see you. (They shake hands.)

PERCY. Thank you, Miss Boggs, I am sure the pleasure is mutual.

MELINDA. Let me introduce you. This is Hiram Boggs, my brother, and Sarah, his wife. Sarah and Hiram, of course, you know this is Mr. and Mrs. Percy Ogden from New York. Land, you ought to feel acquainted, I've told you all about each other, often enough.

HIRAM. We do. Welcome to Cowslip Farm.

SARAH. Yes, friends, the heartiest kind of a welcome.

PERCY and ALICE. Thank you.

SARAH. Take off your things. (PERCY and ALICE remove wraps; SARAH takes them.)

Enter POLLY, R. I E., stands back, bashfully.

PERCY. Ah, ha! Who's that, over there?

ALICE. Why, if it it isn't Polly Flinders! Come here, Polly, and shake hands.

POLLY. (drawing nearer) Be you glad to see me, too?

ALICE. Yes, indeed we are, *very* glad.

PERCY. Of course we are.

They shake hands with POLLY.

POLLY. Golly, I'se glad ob it. I didn't know but mebby you'd forget poor little brack Polly, 'mongst all the rest, and I was goin' ter cry, 'cause I'se tickled most to death to see you. (Blubbering) It seems so good, it most makes me cry for joy.

Runs off, R. I E.

MELINDA. Land, that child thinks her eyes of you.

SARAH. Polly's a good gal.

HIRAM. Yes, she's half the farm. I don't see how we ever run things afore she come.

MELINDA. I've tried hard to learn her things, and she's improvin', some. But she aint perfect yet, goodness knows.

SARAH. You needn't take all the credit, Melinda Jane. Aint we all done well by her?

HIRAM. We've tried ter.

MELINDA. And so you have. I aint one to brag, only you know I felt a sort of a responsibility, seein' I brought her here and tried to make somethin' of her. I'm willing to own you all helped.

PERCY. I dare say you needed help, Miss Boggs. Polly's quite a case.

ALICE. But, after all, I think she is an apt pupil.

MELINDA. Yes, apt to forgit all you tell her. But she's improvin'.

SARAH. I guess you'd like to go to your room, wouldn't you? Melinda, you show 'em up. Will you?

MELINDA. With pleasure.

SARAH. And I'll go'n see about supper. I'm sure you must be 'bout starved.

PERCY. I doubt not we can do justice to whatever you set before us; Mrs. Boggs. Our appetites are not at all conspicuous by their absence, and we have had quite a journey you know.

HIRAM. Don't doubt it. And the old lady's been bakin' up and plannin' things to eat for a week. She'll fill you chuck up, and on good things, too. There aint a better cook in the county.

SARAH. Now, Hiram.

HIRAM. Wall, there aint!

SARAH. The proof of the puddin's in the eatin'. Let them judge for themselves. (*Going, R.*)

MELINDA. Sarah, look at them biscuits, will you?

SARAH. (*pausing*) Yes, I must own up, at any rate, that Melinda Jane can beat me at one thing, and that's biscuits.

HIRAM. Yes, the old maid comes out ahead on biscuits, and no mistake.

SARAH. Come, Hiram, you can help me.

HIRAM. All right.

Exit SARAH and HIRAM, R. U. E.

MELINDA. *Old maid!* Mebby I be, but it aint my fault.

PERCY. No, indeed.

MELINDA. That is, I mean, it aint because I had to be.

ALICE. Even so, Miss Boggs, you need not be ashamed of it.

MELINDA. I aint.

ALICE. But where is Dorothy? We are impatient to see her.

MELINDA. She's in her room and will be right down. I'll go after her. She's chirked up wonderful over your comin', and I know it will do her lots of good. And, oh! say, you said somethin' in your letter about a great surprise. Is it *him*?

ALICE. Her husband?

MELINDA. Yes, Jack Dunning. Have you found him? Have you brought him back?

ALICE. You have guessed aright.

MELINDA. Then he is comin'? *Sure?*

ALICE. Tell her, Percy.

PERCY. Miss Boggs, your heart has told the truth. We have found Jack Dunning, explained all, and brought him back to his wife.

MELINDA. Thank Heaven!

PERCY. Yes, for Heaven helped us.

MELINDA. And where is he? Is he here?

PERCY. Yes, even *here*. We confided in your man, who met us at the station, and he is hiding Jack until the proper time for him to appear.

MELINDA. This is too good to be true. (*Wiping her*

eyes.) O dear! I can hardly believe it! Won't Dorothy be happy, and won't we all?

ALICE. Yes, indeed, Miss Boggs, it will fill our cup of happiness to the brim. Do you think Dorothy can stand it?

MELINDA. Stand it? Bless her dear heart, of course she can. Joy never kills.

PERCY. True. I am sure we need have no fear.

MELINDA. But come, we will find Dorothy, and then you must have your supper. Sarah'll have a fit, if it gits cold.

PERCY. And we are right hungry, too. At least, I am, for one.

ALICE. And I, for another.

MELINDA. How you talk! Aint you both one, now?

PERCY. Yes, but we eat for two.

ALICE. Or more.

Exit, R. U. E., laughing.

Enter POLLY, R. I. E.

POLLY. O golly! such a spread. Aunt Sarah's got it all fixed out in dar, and dey's goin' ter eat now. I s'pect I'll git a bite. Dar's biscuits and honey, chicken and pie, and I dunno half, but it jest makes dis chile wiggle. I s'pect we's going ter hab a reg'lar jubilee.

W.M. HENRY *opens centre door, and sticks head in.*

W.M. H. Hey, Polly!

POLLY. Who's dat?

W.M. H. I say, Polly Flinders.

POLLY. Oh! is that you, William Henry?

W.M. H. Yes, it's me. Come here.

POLLY. What you want?

W.M. H. Go tell Mr. Boggs I want to see him.

POLLY. Well, come on in.

W.M. H. Naw, I'll wait out here.

POLLY. No, come on in. Dar aint nobuddy here only just me.

W.M. H. All right.

Enter WILLIAM HENRY.

W.M. H. Go tell him.

POLLY. Yep. You wait.

W.M. H. I be a-waitin'.

Exit POLLY, R. I. E.

WM. H. (*looking off* R. U. E.) There they be, all settin' down to supper. And Mis' Dunnin', too. Poor, pretty creatur', I'm glad for her sake her man's come back to 'er. But it'll be lonesome here at Cowslip Farm without her and Polly Flinders.

Enter HIRAM, R. I. E.

HIRAM. Well, William, is it all fixed?

WM. H. Yes; Mr. Dunnin' he's in that room there (*pointing* L. U. E.) as impatient as a young one and restless as a cow's tail in fly-time.

HIRAM. All right. Sarah's got it all made up with the rest of 'em to send Dorothy out here, and we'll send Jack out, and let 'em have it over between 'em. See?

WM. H. Yes, I see. Gosh! it's jest like a novel book; I vum if it aint!

HIRAM. So 'tis, William Henry; so 'tis. Come on, let's have it over.

WM. H. Yes; the sooner the better.

Exit HIRAM, L. U. E., followed by WILLIAM HENRY. Enter SARAH R. U. E.

SARAH. O dear! I'm all in a flutter! (*Looking* L. U. E.) He's in there. (*Looking* R. U. E.) And she's in there. Well, what we want now is to have 'em both in *here*. I *do* hope this is the end of their troubles. Goodness knows they're had their share. But I mustn't waste no more time. O dear! it's real romantic!

Exit R. U. E. Pause, after which enter DOROTHY, R. U. E. She wears brighter dress.

DOROTHY. There is no one here. What did Aunt Sarah mean by saying there was some one to see me? She must have been mistaken. (*Going* R.)

Enter JACK, L. U. E., unseen by DOROTHY.

JACK. Dorothy.

DOROTHY. That voice? It is Jack! (*Sees him.*)

JACK. Yes, Jack your husband. Dorothy, can you forgive me? (*About to kneel to her.*) See, on my knees—

DOROTHY. No, no, not on your knees, but on your heart!

He opens his arms, she falls into them. At front of stage.

JACK. Dorothy, my wife! Can you forgive me?

DOROTHY. *Forgive you, Jack?* This is the opportunity,

the moment I have hoped and prayed for. I *do* forgive you. And we shall never part again!

JACK. Never, until death. But I have been so bad, so cruel!

DOROTHY. Never mind. I, too, have been to blame. We will forgive and forget all.

They embrace and stand silent. Enter, R., SARAH, PERCY, ALICE, MELINDA, and POLLY; L., HIRAM and WILLIAM HENRY. They form half-circle at back and sing "Auld Lang Syne." Picture.

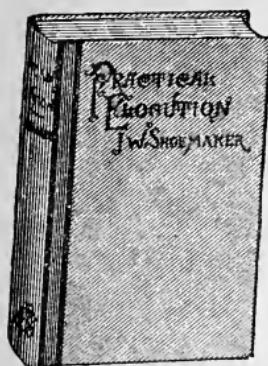
SLOW CURTAIN

END

NOTE.—Specialties may be introduced in the fifth act, if convenient a male quartette of farm hands to be called "The Homespun Quartette." The quartette may sing softly, outside, during the meeting of Jack and Dorothy.

3477-176
Lot 57

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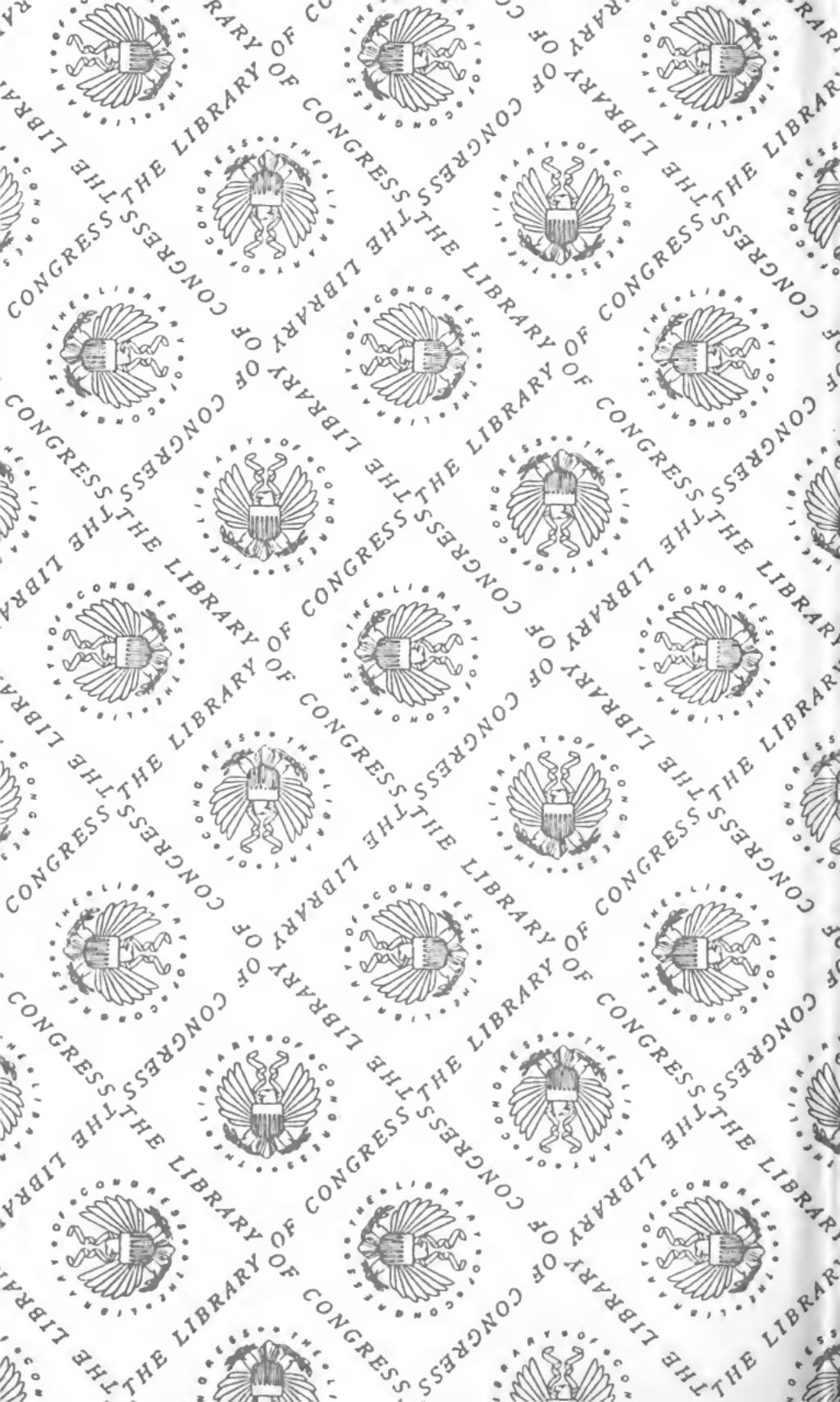
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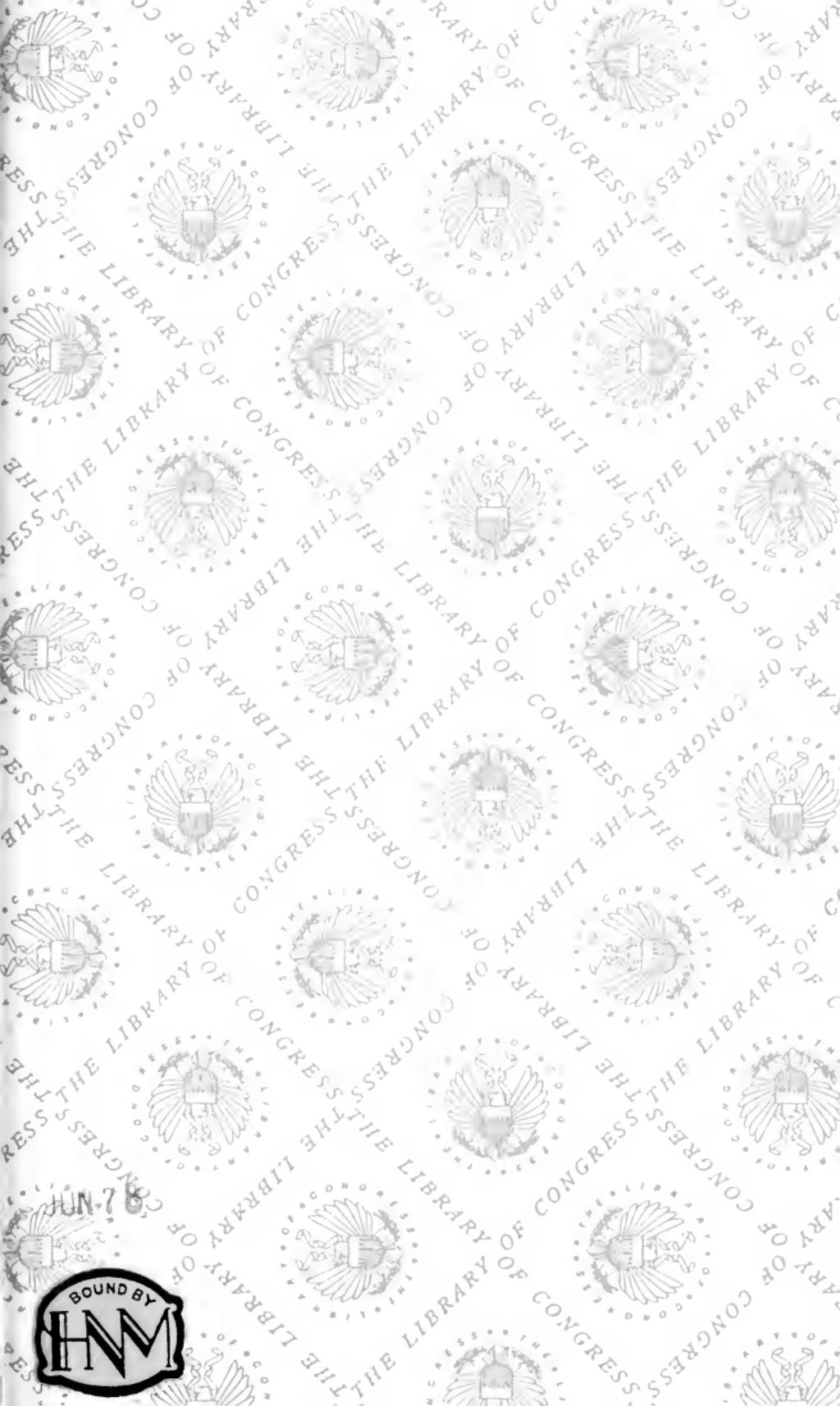
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